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THE ROMAN EMPIRE

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

ESSAYS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY FROM THE ACCESSION OF DOMITIAN (81 A.D.) TO THE RETIREMENT OF NICEPHORUS III. (1081 A.D.)

BY

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VOLUME I

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TO MY FRIEND

ALFRED J. BUTLER, D.Litt.,

FELLOW AND BURSAR OF BRASENOSE, WHOSE WORK ON THE ARAB CONQUEST OF EGYPT IS NOT THE LEAST NOTABLE MONUMENT OF THE INTEREST OF OUR COLLEGE IN THE HISTORY OF IMPERIAL ROME

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

BOOK I

THE PAGAN EMPIRE: THE CIVILIAN MONARCHY AND THE MILITARY REACTION

CHAP.

I. The Reign of Domitian and the Era of the Earlier Antonines (81–180 A.D.) 25

II. The Pseudo-Antonines; or, the Afro-Syrian House and the Regimen of Women (180–235 A.D.) . . . 43

III. The Moral Revival, the Suggested Dyarchy, and the Illyrian Line (235–285 A.D.) 65

IV. Centralised Absolutism; or, the System of Diocletian and Constantine (285–337 A.D.) 88

BOOK II

PROBLEMS OF THE NEW MONARCHY AND THE NEW SUBJECTS; OR, THE LIMITATIONS OF AUTOCRACY AND THE BARBARIAN OFFER

I. The New System of Caste and Officialism; the Severance of Civil and Military Orders; and the Influx of Aliens 109

II. Legitimacy; or, the Dynastic Epoch and the Successors of Constantine (337–457 A.D.) 125

III. Liberal Imperialism; or, the Functions of the Emperor and the Proffer of Barbarian Loyalty . . . 146

IV. The Era of the Patricians; or, the Barbarian Protectorate 168

BOOK III

RECONSTRUCTION AND COLLAPSE UNDER THE HOUSES OF JUSTIN AND HERACLIUS: VICTORY OF CIVILIAN AND REACTION TO MILITARY FORMS

CHAP. PAGE

I. The Eastern Rejection of the Teutonic Patronate; and the Adoptive Period of Mature Merit (457–527 A.D.) 195

II. The Restoration; or, Period of Conquest and Central Control under Justinian (527–565 A.D.) 218

III. Success of the Forces arrayed against Absolutism; Overthrow of the Empire (565-610 A.D.) 246

IV. The Protest of Carthage; or, the Second African House and the Orthodox Crusade (610–711 A.D.) . . 268

BOOK IV

ZENITH AND DECLINE OF THE BYZANTINE MONARCHY UNDER ASIATIC INFLUENCE: ROMAN TRADITION, THE COURT, AND THE FEUDAL NOBILITY

I. The Second Syrian House; or, the Attempt at Protestant Reform (717–820 A.D.) 291

II. The Pretenders, and the Establishment of the Dynasty of Phrygia (820–919 A.D.) 310

III. The Epoch of the Byzantine "Shogunate"; or, the Age of Military Expansion and Recovery (919-1025 A.D.) 328

IV. Extinction of Roman Tradition under the Daughters of Constantine IX. (1025–1081 A.D.) 340

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD 354

ANALYSIS 373

LIST OF EMPERORS AND DYNASTIES

A. First "Flavian" House:			
Vespasianus	69–79	.	milit. nom.
Titus (son)	79–81	.	birth.
Domitianus	81–96	.	birth.
B. Adoptive or Antoninian Period:			
M. Cocceius Nerva	96–98	.	senat. nom.
Nerva Trajanus (Spain)	98–117	.	adoption.
Ælius Hadrianus	117–138	.	? adopt.
Titus Antoninus I. Pius	138–161	.	adopt.
Marc. Aurelius Antoninus II.	161–180	.	adopt.
M. Antoninus III. Verus	161–169	.	adopt.
Luc. Aurel. Commod. Antoninus IV.	180–192	.	birth.
Helvius Pertinax	193	.	senat. nom.
Didius Julianus I.	193	.	milit. nom.
Pescennius Niger (in Syria)	193–194	.	milit. nom.
Clodius Albinus (in Brit.)	193–197	.	milit. nom.
C. Afro-Syrian House and Pseudo-Antonines:			
L. Septimius Severus I. (Afric.)	193–211	.	milit. nom.
M. Aurelius Antoninus V. ("Caracallus," son)	211–217	.	birth and 'adoption.'
Antoninus VI. Geta (brother)	211–212	.	birth.
M. Opilius Macrinus	217–218	.	milit. nom.
Antoninus VII. Diadumenianus	218	.	birth.
M. Aurel. Antoninus VIII. ("Elagabalus," son of A. V.)	218–222	.	milit. nom. and 'birth.'
M. Aurel. Severus II. Alexander	222–235	.	birth.
L. Jul. Aur. Uranius Antoninus IX. (in East).			
D. Gordian House (from Africa):			
Jul. Valer. Maximinus I. (Dacia)	235–238	.	milit. nomin.
Maximus I. (? or -inus), son	236–238	.	birth.
M. Antonius Gordianus I. (at Carthage)	238	.	provinc. nomin.
M. Ant. Gordianus II. (son)	238	.	birth.
Maximus II. Pupienus	238	.	senat. nomin.
Dec. Jun. Balbinus	238	.	senat. nomin.
M. Antonius Gordianus III. (son of II.)	238–244	.	milit. nom. and birth.
E. Period of Disorder:			
M. Julius Philippus I. and II. (Arab)	244–249	.	milit. nomin.
C. Messius Decius (Pannon.)	249–251	.	milit. nom.
Herennius Etruscus (son)		.	birth.
Hostilianus (brother)	251–252	.	birth.
C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus	251–253	.	milit. nom.
Volusianus Gallus II. (son)		.	birth.
Æmilianus	253	.	milit. nom.

P. LICINIUS VALERIANUS I. . . . 253–260 . milit. nom.
P. LICIN. GALLIENUS (son) . . . 253–268 . birth.
LICINIUS VALERIANUS II. (brother)
SALONINUS (nephew), &c. or VALERIANUS III.

F. The "Thirty Tyrants":—

(*a*) The Gaulish monarchy:

POSTUMUS . . . . . 258–267 . milit. nom.
kills Saloninus at Cologne.
Reigns at Trèves over Gaul, Britain, Spain; associates—
VICTORINUS { a reneg. general of Gallien, slain by own troops . . . . . } 265–268 . co-opt.
LÆLIANUS { elev. and slain by own troops . . } 267 . . . milit. nom.
MARIUS { elev. and slain by own troops . . } 267 Oct.–268 Feb.
VICTORIA (mother of Victorin) . . 268–270? .
TETRICUS { gov. of Aquitaine; yields to Aurelian, 274 . . . . . } 268–274 . FEMALE nom.

(*b*) The Eastern Monarchy:

(1) Roman: in Egypt and Syria—
BALISTA (?) and CYRIADES 261
FULV. MACRIANUS . { vanq. by Aureolus. } 261–262
MACRIANUS II. (son)
QUIETUS (son)

(2) Alien—
SEPTIMIUS ODÆNATHUS, recogn. by Gallien . . 'imp.' 262 'Aug.' 264–267 . co-opt.
HERODES (son), both slain by Mæonius . . . . . } 265–266 . birth.
ZENOBIA (wife of Od) 266–273
VABALATHUS (son) . . . 'Aug' 270 or 1–272 birth.

(*c*) Brief and sporadic seditions:

Pannonia.

INGENUUS . . { vanq. by Aureolus. } 258
REGALIANUS, ? Dacian (killed by own soldiers).

Isauria.

TREBELLIANUS (bandit, predec. of Zeno and Longinus).

Egypt.

ÆMILIANUS II. { vanq. by Theodotus. Sent by Gallien. } 263
FIRMUS I. (a 'bandit'). 274

North Italy.

AUREOLUS, Dacian herdsman (long faithful lieut. of Gallien) } 267–270

G. The "Illyrian" or Pannonian line:

M. AUREL. CLAUDIUS II. . . . . 268–270 . milit. nom.
QUINTILLUS (brother) . . . . . 270 . . . birth.
L. DOMIT. VALER. AURELIANUS . 270–275 . milit. nom.
M. CLAUDIUS TACITUS . . . . . 275–276 . senat. nomin.
FLORIANUS (brother) . . . . 276 . . . birth.

M. Aurelius Valer. Probus	276–282	.	milit. nom.
M. Aurelius Carus	282–283	.	milit. nom
M. Aurelius Numerianus (son)	283	.	birth.
M. Aurelius Carinus (brother)	283–285	.	birth.
Julianus II.			
C. Aurel. Valer. Diocletianus	284-305	.	milit. nom
M. Aurel. Valer. Maximianus	285-305	.	co-opt.
C. Galerius Maximianus II.	305-311	.	adopt.
Julianus III. (Carth.).			
Carausius and Allectus (Britain)	286-293	.	milit. nom.

H. The "Flavian" Houses (Constantine, Valentinian, and Theodosius):

Flavius Valer. Constantius I. (grand-nephew of Claud. II.)	305–306	.	adopt.
Flav. Val. Constantinus I.	306–337	.	birth.
Maximinus II. (or III.?)	308–313	.	co-opt.
Severus III.	307–308	.	co-opt.
Maxentius (son of Maximian I.)	306–312	.	milit. nom.
P. Valerius L'ianus Licinius III. and IV. (son)	308–323	.	co-opt.
Flav. Jul. Constantinus II. (sons of C. I.)	337–340	.	birth.
Fla. Jul. Constantius II. (sons of C. I.)	337–361	.	birth.
Flav. Jul. Constans I. (sons of C. I.)	337–350	.	birth.
Magnentius (Gaul)	350–353	.	milit. nom.
Decentius (brother)	351–353	.	milit. nom.
Vetranio	350	.	milit. nom.
Nepotianus (in Rome)	350	.	milit. nom.: birth.
Silvanus (Gaul at Cologne)	355	.	milit. nom.
Flav. Claudius Julianus IV. (cousin of Constance II.)	361–363	.	birth.
Flav. Jovianus	363–364	.	milit. nom.

West				East			
us Valentinius I.	364–375	.	mil. nom.	Flavius Valens (bro.)	364–378	.	birth.
ius Gratianus (son)	375–383	.	birth.	Procopius	365, 366	.	birth.
ius Valentinius II. (brother)	375–392			Flavius Theodosius I.	378–395	.	co-opt.
ximus III.	383–388	.	milit. nom.				
enius	392–394	.	Barb. nom.				
Theodosius I.	394–395	.		Flav. Arcadius (son)	395–408	.	birth.
Honorius	395–423	.	birth.				
tain—							
rcus	405		mil. nom.				
atianus II.	406						
nstantinus III.	407–411						
stans II. (son)	409–411						
tain—							
ximus IV.	410	.	Barb. nom.				
ntz—							
inus (Gaul)	411						
stianus (bro.	412			Flav. Theodosius II. (son)	408–450	.	birth.
r. Attalus (in Rome)	409–410	.	Barb. nom.				
Constantius (bro.-in-law to or.)	421						
annes I.	423–425	.	Barb. nom.				

WEST			EAST		
FLAV. PLAC. VALENTINIANUS III. (son of Const. III. and Placidia)	425–455	birth.			
PETRONIUS MAXIMUS V.	455–456	? nom.			
AVITUS (in Gaul)	456–457	prov. nom.			
			FLAV. MARCIANUS (husb. of Pulcheria)	450–457	FEMA right
FLAV. JUL. VAL. MAJORIANUS	457–461	BARB. nom.	I. Later Pseudo-Flavians and House of Justin: FLAVIUS LEO I. (Thrac.)	457–474	BARB nom
FLAV. LIBIUS SEVERUS IV.	461–465	BARB. nom.			
[Interregnum]					
FLAV. PROCOP. ANTHEMIUS	467–472	co-opt. East (? birth)			
OLYBRIUS	472	BARB. nom. and FEMALE right.			
FL. GLYCERIUS	473–474	BARB. nom.	FLAVIUS LEO II. (son)	474	
JULIUS II. NEPOS	474–475	co-opt. East.	FLAVIUS ZENO (father)	474–475	FEMA right
ROMULUS	475–476	milit. nom.	BASILISCUS (bro. of Leo's widow)	475–477	FEMA nom
			ZENO (restored)	477–491	
FLAV. ODOVACAR (*patric.*)	476–491		FLAV. ANASTASIUS I. (husb. of Ariadne)	491–518	FEMA right
THEODORIC (*patric.*) king in Italy	489 493		FLAV. ANIC. JUSTINUS I.	518–527	'præt nom
			FLAV. ANICIUS JUSTINIANUS I. (neph.)	527–565	birth.
			FLAV. JUSTINUS II. (neph.)	565–578	birth.
			FLAV. TIBERIUS II. CONSTANTINUS	578–582	adopt
			FLAV. MAURICIUS	582–602	adopt
			PHOCAS (or FOCAS)	602–610	milit. nom

K. The Second African House, or the Dynasty of Heraclius:

HERACLIUS I. (from Carth.)	610–641	milit. pretend.
HERACLIUS II. (or Const. IV. ?), son	641	birth.
HERACLIUS III. (or Heraclônas) bro.	641	birth.
TIBERIUS III. ('David'), bro.		birth.
"CONSTANS III." (son of Her. II.)	641–668	birth.
CONSTANTINUS IV. POGONATUS (son	668–685	birth.
HERACLIUS IV. bros. assoc.		birth.
TIBERIUS IV.		birth.
JUSTINIANUS II. (son	685–695	birth.
LEONTIUS	695–698	milit. conspir.
TIBERIUS V. APSIMARUS	698–705	milit. nom.
JUSTINIANUS II. (restored)	705–711	foreign aid.

	TIBERIUS VI., his son, ? assoc.	birth.	
	PHILIPPICUS, BARDANES	711–713	milit. nom.
	ANASTASIUS II.	713–716	palace nom.
	THEODOSIUS III. or IV.	716–717	milit. nom.
L.	The Second Syrian House, or the Dynasty of the 'Isaurians':		
	LEO III. (Conon) (Isaur. or Syr.)	717–740	milit. nom.
	CONSTANTINUS V. (son)	740–775	birth.
	ARTAVASDUS (son-in-law of Leo III.)	741–742	FEMALE right.
	LEO IV. (son)	775–780	birth.
	CONSTANTINUS VI. (son)	780–797	birth.
	IRENE (mother)	797–802	FEMIN. usurp.
	NICEPHORUS I. (Arab)	802–811	palace conspir.
	STAURACIUS (son)	811	birth.
	MICHAEL I. (bro.-in-law)	811–813	FEMALE right.
	LEO V. (Armenian)	813–820	milit. nom.
M.	The House of Amorium, or the Phrygian Dynasty:		
	MICHAEL II.	820–829	milit. conspir.
	THEOPHILUS (son)	829–842	birth.
	MICHAEL III. (son)	842–867	birth.
	BASILIUS I.	867–886	co-opt.
	LEO VI. (son of Mich. III.)	886–911	birth.
	ALEXANDER (son of Basil I.)	911 912	birth.
	CONSTANTINUS VII. (son of Leo VI.)	912–959	birth.
	ROMANUS I. LECAPENUS	919–944	milit. nom.
	STEPHANUS, CHRISTOPHORUS, CONSTANTINUS VIII.	944	birth.
	(CONSTANTINUS VII. (sole)	944–959)	
	ROMANUS II. (son of Const. VII. grandson of Romanus I.)	959–963	birth.
	BASILIUS II. (son)	963 1025	birth.
	CONSTANTINUS IX. (brother)	963–1028	birth.
	NICEPHORUS II. PHOCAS	963–969	milit. nom. and FEMALE right.
	JOHANNES II. TZIMISCES (neph.)	969–976	palace conspir.
	ROMANUS III. (son-in-law to Const. IX., husb. to Zoë)	1028–1034	FEMALE right.
	MICHAEL IV. (Paphlag.) husb. to Zoë	1034–1041	FEMALE right.
	MICHAEL V. (nephew) adopted by Zoë	1041–1042	FEMIN. adopt.
	ZOË AND THEODORA (sisters together)	1042	
	CONSTANTINUS X. (Monomachus), husb. of Zoë	1042–1054	FEMALE right.
	THEODORA (alone) d. of Const. IX.	1054–1056	birth.
	MICHAEL VI. (Stratioticus)	1056–1057	FEM. nomin.
N.	Prelude of the Comnenian Age and House of Ducas:		
	ISAACIUS I. (Comnenus)	1057–1059	milit. nom.
House of Ducas	CONSTANTINUS XI. (Ducas)	1059–1067	civil. nomin.
	EUDOCIA (widow and regent for— MICHAEL VII., ANDRONICUS I., CONSTANTINUS XII.)	her sons 1067	
	ROMANUS IV. (Diogenes), husb. of Eudocia	1068–1071	FEM. right and milit. nom.
	MICHAEL VII. (with his brothers)	1071–1078	
	CONSTANTINUS XIII. son.	1075– ?	
	NICEPHORUS (III.) Bryennius		milit. pretend.
	NICEPHORUS III. (IV.), Botaniates	1078–1081	milit. pretend.

C. Pseudo-*Antonines:* Spartianus, *Geta*, § 2. "In animo habuit Severus ut omnes deinceps principes quemadmodum *Augusti*, ita etiam *Antonini* dicerentur."

Lampridius *Diadumenus*, § 6. "Fuit quidem tam amabile illis temporibus nomen *Antoninorum* ut qui eo nomine non niteretur, mereri non videretur imperium."

Capitolinus *Macrinus*, § 3. "Alii vero tantum desiderium nominis hujus fuisse dicunt, ut nisi populus et milites *Antonini* nomen audirent, imperatorem eum non putarent" (cum Petschenig).

H. The *Flavian* Houses: The name Antoninus being now obsolete, its place in popularity is taken by the name *Flavius*, which attained so great a vogue that it was adopted by barbarian kings; and especially by the Lombards, as a title of office: *cf.* Paulus Diaconus, Gest. Langob.: of Authari's election, 584 A.D. "Quem etiam ob dignitatem *Flavium* appellarunt, quo prænomine omnes (qui postea fuerunt Langobardorum reges) feliciter usi sunt" (*v.* Abel's note, p. 60). Recared the Visigoth assumed also: Odovacar had done so on failure of Western line: The same reason as for name *Antoninus;* or for eager acceptance of title *patricius*=endeavour to obtain by this affiliation or adoption a semblance of legitimacy and continuity.

K. A similar emphasis is given to the name *Tiberius*, now completely reinstated in popular favour,—a tardy and ironical justice to a great emperor. It is borne by *Tiberius* Constantine; Martina's son David changes to it during the brief, joint reigns of Heraclius I.'s sons by his second marriage; the brother of Constantine IV. reigning with him about 678, is another *Tiberius*, and Pope Agatho (writing after Synod of 680) addresses to the three co-emperors Const., Heracl. IV., and Tiberius IV. In the same year they were degraded. It is doubtful whether the poor lad (in whose pathetic murder near the altar the line became extinct) was associated by Justinian II.: but it is at least probable. With the family of Heraclius, the fascination of the once-detested name was forgotten, and the "Isaurian" and Phrygian families hark back once more to the traditions of Constantine the Great. It seems quite obvious that Heraclius deliberately (like his predecessor Severus), sought connection with the beloved Tiberius II. Apsimar assumed it (during the interregnum under Justinian's reign), no doubt at the express wish of his supporters; and it was adopted by more than one rebel in the West before the final severance of Rome from the empire.

CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

INTRODUCTION

Scope and Value.

§ 1. THE purpose of the following essays, written for the use of general reader and modern politician, is to add a modest contribution to the interpretation of the imperial system. I have tried to follow the development of the constitution during a period of one thousand years; and I must sooner or later justify this choice of somewhat arbitrary limits; why should the historian begin with Domitian and relax his flagging interest at the dethronement of the third Nicephorus? I am well aware that all the limits of all historical periods are in truth fictitious and imaginary; and it is an idle task to dam up the current of a river, in the vain hope of obtaining leisure to analyse its constituents or its direction. I am a firm believer in the continuity of the development of mankind; though I do not always accept the assurance or the evidence of those who imagine that their route is direct, their destination certain. It is the part of the student to trace the presages and premonitions of the future in an earlier epoch; and with a limited power of judgment to suggest rather than to dogmatise upon the real and often subterranean forces, already silently at work but only emerging in a later age. I have chosen the opening date of the period because I feel that other competent critics have already devoted, or might devote, their time with far greater success than

Scope and Value.

myself to the classical age of the empire—I mean the Julo-Claudian house; and I am not without misgivings in addressing myself to the Flavian restoration, and that period of repose endeared to the young student by the half-merited eulogy of Gibbon, the "Age of the Five Good Emperors." It is impossible, however, to dispense entirely with some sort of general appraisement of the method, the function, and the success of the early empire, in its self-appointed task. But the modern scholar—weighted with material steadily accumulating, each year needing more scientific and minute equipment for the simplest task or the briefest monograph—must learn the lesson of abstinence and accept without a murmur the profound and salutary law of the "division of labour." It were in vain to multiply continuous narratives in English dress of the events already told by the four great English historians—Gibbon, Finlay, Bury, and Hodgkin. It would be an impertinence to repeat again the records which are open to all in their stately, sincere, critical, or eloquent pages. Nor is there need for me to reiterate, what is obvious, my constant indebtedness to their patience, care, and suggestiveness. I would only add to these familiar authorities the names of two others, equally well known, who have laboured less in this portion of human records. It has been my privilege at different times to know both these Oxford professors, Freeman and Pelham, who have done so much to encourage an exact and sympathetic knowledge of the past. And this little contribution is in some sense due to their stimulating interest in younger men, which influence hundreds besides myself have felt and appreciated, though perhaps few in this busy and unresting age have had leisure to follow up their fascinating suggestions. But the Oxford tutor cannot forget that besides the rare intervals of learned ease in term, there are six months in the year during which the multifarious and conflicting duties of tuition or administration can be laid aside

Scope and Value.

for a concentrated task. When from some of our younger men such works as Mr. Henderson's "Nero" or Dr. Dudden's "St. Gregory" are produced, one feels not merely pride in their fellowship but a confidence that the utilitarian changes, which many anticipate to-day, will respect even if they cannot understand the devotion and the industry of such scholars, their steady interest in a single obscure page of history. It seems clear that the prejudice against classical studies can only be justified in any degree when the acquaintance with a dead language in its minute structure is thought an end in itself, and no real attempt is made by its use to lay open the treasures or decipher the teaching of the past. In an age like the present, when concentrated and continuous reading is becoming obsolete, it is more than ever needful for the few who have the key and the leisure to turn it, to unlock the door for the general benefit. I do not know any better remedy against the hasty opportunism of amateurs who know only the surface of their own age and none of the hidden causes that have produced it—than acquaintance with the events and lessons of history. There has prevailed to a dangerous extent a complacent idea that about the middle of the nineteenth century there dawned a new era different from any that had gone before; and that the opening of the vote and the closing of the ballot-box have made a mighty change in human nature. This regeneration of mankind may be dated from the popular outbursts in 1848, or the Great Exhibition of 1851—from a violent or a peaceful origin; but the newest phase of society cannot be said at the present moment to have acquired any very definite or encouraging features. We are still constantly thrown back upon the past for parallels of warning or instruction. Few supporters survive of the theory of an unbroken advance to a certain goal; indeed there are not many who venture a satisfactory definition of progress. It would be the height of folly to reject the lessons

Scope and Value.

which Roman development can display to us, on the hypothesis of some permanent metamorphosis which has of late transformed our nature and made all past precedent superfluous and inapplicable. Whether the cause of the change be the Christian religion reaching at last, after dogmatic aberrations, its true social function, or the scientific inroad of unquestioned fact and unerring sequence, or the new humanitarian and cosmopolitan sentiment destined to weld mankind into a sympathetic commonwealth of equal and free citizens—such a mighty influence is often believed to be triumphing everywhere by a complacent critic of a limited span of years. And yet we have not to look far for striking and significant parallels between our own times and the first three centuries; the crowned Communism or empurpled Socialism, which under cover of a fictitious plutocratic census of rank and dignity very cleverly exploited the rich for the benefit of the poor, and turned the personal wealth, power, and pride of the people's representative into genuine democratic affluence; the professed pacific basis of the State and its stationary limits; the undying feud between the two conceptions of the emperor, as mature and efficient magistrate in an autonomous State, and as secluded and semi-divine sovereign, wielding as in Neo-Platonism, indirectly and through agents, a sacred and autocratic power; the retreat of the historic families from the active charges of public life to give place to lesser men, without tradition and often without conscience; the gradual drifting of these intermediate functionaries (whom we should now term by the collective title of bureaucracy) out of control, alike independent of the fury or protests of the people or the frown of a helpless monarch; the fond attachment to the fiction of a free election, combined with a natural instinct, in the subject no less than in the interested dynasty, for hereditary succession; the severance of function, or "division of labour," which results from any calculated formulation of the respective duties of

government and citizen—the careful partition of class and interest and function, until the whole business of the State is transferred to experts, and the boasted democratic opening to average intelligence is falsified in the excessive power enjoyed by secret and irresistible committees, of national defence, or of finance or education; the growing irresponsibility of the governors and the difficulty of reform; the popular and progressive sympathies of the sovereign thwarted at every turn by the intrigues of the palace; the gradual creation of an independent class, sometimes of the rich, at others of the official hierarchy, who claim to be above law, and withdraw themselves by privilege and immunity from the restraints which govern the rest of mankind; the tendency to centralise in a nominal autocrat, who by the very fulness of recognition loses most of his real influence: such are the features of the ancient republic which must to any student of our own time suggest throughout Europe to-day the closest of analogies. For what is true of a despotic State (so-called) is found to be true also of a free commonwealth; that is, the exclusion of the "people" from any real share in their government beyond the payment of taxes, over which they have little control, and the surrender of power to compact and irresponsible minorities—not like an aristocracy of birth directly amenable and highly sensitive to public opinion, but lacking dignity or conviction as they lack publicity, and during their tenure of power indifferent to its voice. These are serious falsifications of the hopes and prayers so freely showered upon the new age, which dates its era from the middle of last century. Yet no one who, without prejudice as to the peculiar monarchic or representative formula of the constitution, meditates on the actual problems in Russia or in France, in the United States or even in England, can deny that modern society has many features in common with that age, whose history we propose to follow. Nor is the mere analysis of slow and

Scope and Value.

Scope and Value.

cyclic development without value; our horizon of history is perhaps dangerously circumscribed to-day, and the vague movement of the impersonal forces cannot be easily detected in the short modern epoch we condescend to honour with our attention.

'Impersonal' treatment of history.

§ 2. But I am well aware that many critics will find this didactic or pragmatic writing of history both tiresome and misleading. "History," they will assert, "can be manipulated so as to teach any lesson which the writer wishes to deduce; and you may with equal plausibility prove the failure and the success of the democratic regimen at Athens, the benign or disastrous result of the feudal system."

"Genuine history is not didactic or exemplary; it is *critical* and *statistical*—that is, it includes the minute record and verification of facts and events; and it is *economic*, to use the word in its wider sense, a careful generalising from data supplied in the former method, as to the impersonal currents and tendencies which underlie and guide them." It is quite true that with the very prevalent denial of free-will, history becomes a survey of dancing automata, plagued with a conviction of their own spontaneity — "wire-pulled" as one of our own emperors would say. We know that Mr. Froude's idea of the claim of historical studies is quite out of fashion: "To discover noble characters and to pay them ungrudging honour." An overt or covert Hegelianism has invaded the already very restricted area of man's liberty; and each actor is detected as the mere mouthpiece of the Time-Spirit, and not in any strict or decisive sense, himself. And with this in view, most historians (except perhaps the romantic Mommsen) prefer not to distribute praise and blame with the cheap and facile moralising of an older school. Nero is no longer the target of abuse for superhuman wickedness; and the Cæsars are transformed from unrecognisable monsters into the tied exponents of general tendencies. Hence we see to-day a kindly and universal inclination to rehabilitate;

for by a genial inconsistency, we like to attribute a man's virtues to himself and spread the responsibility for his vices upon his age, his circumstances, his education. And it must seriously be confessed that the philosophical student of history cannot fail to be impressed with the small and futile part played on the world's stage by conscious and deliberate intent. The symmetrical and calculated constitution falls to pieces at once; and the ill-balanced and creaking edifice of centuries of remodelling outlasts every rival and defies every reformer. Hegel writes as if the genuine actors in the drama were the invisible age- or race-spirits, which "gather round the throne of the Eternal"—each having played its part and contributed its quota to the grand design—assembling, as it were, for the last scene, the brilliant *ensemble* of the final chorus and consummation. For him, man is of value only as a "type," or rather only as an instance of a "type." And it need not be said that to this agrees modern fiction, whether in story or theatre; for the hero is no successful adventurer, but rather one struggling in the grip of aimless destiny; and there is always an undercurrent of irony, the spectator and reader knowing, as in the Sophoclean Œdipus, the vast gulf stretching between his confessed purpose and the real ends he unconsciously subserves. And thus personal history is out of date; we abandon the consular lists, the imperial series, and try to immerse ourselves in the life of the people, or detect the vague current of the time; we snatch eagerly at the least hint of genuine feeling, of daily routine, of economic and social changes. Disgusted with the parade or treachery of courts, we turn away from the industrious minuteness of Lebeau, as a typical chronicler of an age when national life seemed to centre in a palace. And in reaction, we are inclined to invest with unmerited virtues and a fixed public opinion, the great mass of the subject population. We forget that this very public opinion, the test and

'Impersonal' treatment of history.

'Impersonal' treatment of history.

safeguard of fitness for self-government, is a plant of modern and tender growth; and in some countries, as France, it has already ceased to blossom, just as in the strangely akin monarchy which is its well-assorted ally, it has not yet begun to thrive. It is a revenge upon the failure of deliberate statesmen and calculating administrators that we set up the ideal of the honest but reserved "Will of the People," the sound heart of the nation—not indeed articulate in personal edicts or manifestos, but beating somewhere and pulsing through the still dormant frame with a vague yet rhythmic movement.

Empire representative of 'Will of the Age.'

§ 3. No one, I feel sure, would wish to dispute the one single indisputable axiom left to us in the wreck of most positive political belief, as we have perforce to start again from the very alphabet of social needs—I mean the good nature, the honesty and the kindliness of the average man. I am indeed confident that upon this basis alone can any future reconstruction of decrepit democracy take a firm place; given over it would seem to-day to general supineness and stagnation, out of which emerge the strange panaceas of scientific biologists, and the secret and (in effect) irresponsible rule of interested minorities—both uniting in a single fear, that of any genuine appeal to the people, in a single contempt, that of the native loyalty and friendliness of the normal man. Now we are apt to transfer our admiration for this untutored instinct of the individual to the mass; the good sense of the voter to the body of heterogeneous representatives which he calls together. But a knowledge of history does not bear out this hasty generalisation. It is to be feared that assemblies stand for disunion and the spirit of envious partizans, save in some rare moment of national crisis. The reason of the success of the imperial system, its hold upon popular affection, lay in this conviction—that it aimed at strict impartiality, uniform justice, equalisation of burden and of opportunity. But can it be honestly main-

tained, with the whole turbulent history of the conciliar period before us, from Nice, let us say, to the "robber-den" at Ephesus, that any question of universal moment could have been safely intrusted to the people's representatives? And was not the tacit agreement of the democracy, by no means without intermittent articulateness and plain speech—that nothing could replace the Cæsarian regimen, a proof of the soundness of their common sense? It is quite possible that free government in the genuine sense may imply disorder as an ingredient, not as an exception; just as in Teutonic subjectivity and in feudalism, private war, local justice, and the duel shattered a centralised and uniform government. *Empire representative of 'Will of the Age.'*

It would be no real paradox, in these days, when perhaps no formal principles of universal validity are acknowledged in any sphere, to say that much too high a price can be paid for public order; and that the entire liberal yet firm policy of the empire was at fault in not encouraging free-play in those decaying or rudimentary forces which occupied or coveted the charmed area. It might be easy to show that on the whole this judicious restraint, this equalising and humane law, was to the advantage of the weaker and numerous class, who, whatever the precise designation of the State, seem under any commonwealth to suffer alike. To the credit of the imperial line, it cannot be maintained that the single popular representative was ever intimidated into the enormity of class-legislation. (For this is not condemned by any preconceived standard of right and wrong, but merely on account of its imprudence; for the law of reaction and reprisal is ignored and this old principle is accepted unconsciously, that the final form of social order shall be a perpetual state of civil war and alternate injustice.) Yet on the other hand all law settlement and security tell in favour of the class in power; and it must be confessed that it is difficult to get away from the

Empire representative of 'Will of the Age.'

cynical truth of a Platonic formula, τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος σύμφερον, or the ironical sarcasm of Euripides on Greek law-making, πρὸς τῶν ἐχόντων Φοιβὲ τὸν νόμον τίθης. And the heroic attempts to hold the colossus together, such as we witness again and again in the devoted and untiring sacrifice of an Aurelian, a Probus, a Diocletian, a Justinian, a Heraclius, a Leo—may well be branded as selfish and egoistic defiance of praiseworthy nationalism. It is a humiliating confession for professed Christians living under an honest social system—but we lack entirely the certain data or absolute standard by which to measure or to criticise. We are told that Providence is on the side of big battalions, but we are as yet unaware if it extends its fullest sympathies to overgrown empires and confederations; whether the drift of time sets steadily and with some hidden purpose towards aggregations of warring elements, kept in leash by some central impartial and forcible power. And even if we allow this to be actually the direction of the current to-day, we may at least utter a vain and regretful protest against the extinction of the lesser states, the local liberties, the more direct and sincere contact of the citizen with the working of State—all which are of necessity sacrificed to the interests of a vague yet overpowering Ideal. And one must repeat—it is no paradox to affirm with Tacitus one's academic predilection for the matchless spectacle of the noble savage in his continual feuds, of the indefinite turmoil and exuberant disorder of petty commonwealths, living the simple life, boasting the more manly virtues, and regarding war (in the intervals of the chase) as the noblest and normal occupation of man. With certain modifications, one is strongly tempted with a small and powerful section of English politicians to admire freedom, tongue, nationality; and to believe that the individual may pay too high a price for safety and order, if it seems to entail the pursuit of aggrandising

and the heavy and costly weight of centralised unity. It is a salubrious maxim of an older school, "Let them fight it out." If the empire preserved with care a fragile and moribund society, if its magical influence tempered and softened and subtly transformed the barbarians—it is clear that it fulfilled a Hegelian mission; the world-spirit was wiser than its children. To have removed the empire (if it was conceivable) would be to unchain the rivalry of class and race and creed. It would appear that the surrender of rights made quite in the fashion of Hobbes, at the commencement of our era, did in effect represent a genuine human wish. The world at that time did not really wish for self-government; and though doubtless it did not accurately estimate the sacrifice it was making for ease and safety and peace, yet it never seriously withdrew its endorsement of the Augustan system. The emperors did not encroach; they were invoked. The provinces did not, like Ireland or Poland or India to-day, seek to break off from a hateful allegiance; but the emperors ceased to be able to protect them; and the memory of that indulgent dominion, idealised by time or absence, lingered on with a wonderful afterglow of sunset until, like many other ideals, it faded in the chilly and artificial illumination of the scientific spirit. We may be quite certain from the familiar character and experience of debating and executive assemblies, that this great fundamental gratitude and aspiration towards integrity and control would not have found expression in any system of representation. It is the natural and excusable tendency of such bodies to accentuate points of difference between principles and parties, to separate into smaller groups, and (as in modern France) present a dazzling kaleidoscope of successive meteoric ministries: and against this disintegrating influence nothing holds the country together but the legacy of the great foreigner—administrative absolutism.

Empire representative of 'Will of the Age.'

An Idea embodied in a series of persons: loyalty cannot dispense with the personal.

§ 4. It is for this reason that we trace one incontestable principle of union, which it is to be hoped will never grow obsolete even in the most scientific and unemotional society—personal loyalty and gratitude to an equitable master. It would seem to be a curious task, destined beforehand to failure, to seek to draw analogies between the function of modern European royalty, with its honourable past and its great but indefinite future, and a system which in many and essential points is the direct negation of its every principle. And it would also seem strange for one who has already professed his distrust in the efficacy of reflection, calculation, and personality, to hark back again to the influence of a sovereign. But it must be remembered that the monarch, by a strange revolution such as fate delights in, has become the unique representative not merely of order, integrity, and national solidarity, but of those warmer emotions and strictly democratic sentiments, which must still continue to regulate and influence mankind. Both emperor and king had origin in the unscrupulous (if justified) victory of armed force; and the modern State no less than imperial Rome, owes its birth to the popular captain and the loyal train-band or legion descending upon anachronism in a Senate, or upon effeminacy in a populace corrupted by long years of peace. Yet round both gathers the strange and intangible feeling of attachment and devotion owed to a parent and father, which is not only difficult to pŭt into language, but is more than difficult to justify by any cool logical process. Yet then as now, it is practically the only sentiment that can unite all sections of society in a common aim; elsewhere, it is increasingly clear, grow the forces, the jealousies, the prejudices, the suspicions which make for disunion. If the centripetal aim of the modern State, overcoming and embracing lesser constituents, be in any way justified by the sole test, the general sum of happiness, it would seem to be essential to preserve this feeling; or rather, seeing that love cannot be

coerced or commandeered, it would seem essential that it be preserved. The language of loyalty and profound obedience may to-day seem artificial and overstrained; yet it is surely better than the passionate yet equally fictitious invective in which the platform and the popular assembly accustom us to the thought, that all political life is made up of hatred and of disrespect. This pretended indignation and contempt may be part of a farce played by actors, who are in truth the best of friends; but it is played before an audience which is quite ready to believe it genuine. As under the empire, we agree about one single point, reverence for the sovereign; in all other respects, we are at feud among ourselves. We may reserve for the body of the volume an analysis of the obvious differences in the conception of an ancient Cæsar and a monarch of to-day; but it is not too much to assert that in both these vague and anomalous ideas lay the seed and safeguard of the pacific development of these early centuries, till the coming of the Teuton. Strictly, the loyalty of provincial subject or barbarian settler was directed to the impersonal majesty of Rome; while to-day (though we speak of the elimination of the personal element) it is character and personality that rather recommends the system. But let us not dwell inopportunely on points of distinction. It is enough now to have noted one matter at least, in which we may learn something of the workings of the average mind through several centuries. And such a study must still to-day have use and interest for us, in spite of the efforts of philosophers and statesmen to supplant the natural emotions by reasoned and deliberate calculation of interest.

An Idea embodied in a series of persons: loyalty cannot dispense with the personal.

§ 5. Let me now adduce some justification for my choice of dates; an apology so long delayed that some may deem my promise forgotten. It was a passage in Zonaras that finally decided my selection of a *terminus ad quem;* he is discussing a prophecy as to the duration of Constantinople, which miscarried. At the bidding of its founder, Valens the astrologer

Reason of our limits: empire dead by 1081.

Reason of our limits: empire dead by 1081.

casts the horoscope of the new capital and finds its duration is fixed by the stars at 696 years; "*which time*" says Zonaras, "*is now long past.*" "*Either,*" he continues, "*we must suppose that the good seer's prediction was in error and his vaunted art was at fault, or we must think that he gave the number of years in which the ancient usages of the republic were maintained,—the constitution of the Senate held in honour and the citizens of Constantinople flourished and rule was according to law—the government, I mean, kingly in the best sense, and not downright tyranny,—where rulers deem the public treasure their own and use it for their private pleasures, giving to whomsoever they will the moneys of the State and not behaving to their subjects as true shepherds of their flock,—who should shear off that which is superfluous only of the fleece and drink sparingly of the milk; whereas these butcher their sheep after the fashion of bandits and take their fill of the flesh,—yea, and suck out the very marrow from the bone.*" This severe judgment is passed by a retired minister of Alexius I. (1081–1118) upon the Comnenian administration. He is writing as a monk on Mount Athos in the reign of his son, John II. (1118–1143), one of the most brilliant and attractive figures in later "Roman" history; or it may be that such bitter remarks as these were added in extreme old age under Manuel Comnenus (1143–1181), whose long reign and chivalrous achievement forms so strange a contrast to the downfall and break-up of the system under the Angelic dynasty. But in any case here is the serious indictment, that the imperial constitution was now a thing of the past; a mere τυράννις with its well-defined implication of selfish aim, and not the responsible magistracy of a free republic, or the fatherly vigilance of the genuine king. Here is very strong testimony to the view that during the most despotic periods the subjects and critics and historians had always regarded themselves as subordinate only to the man of their own unfettered choice, as governed according to settled law and not personal caprice. This sentiment appears clearly in

Laurentius, who examines the development of the chief offices during the reigns of Anastasius, Justin, and Justinian. This is the note of the rescript of a good emperor, "Though we are released from the restraint of law, yet it is our aim and pleasure to live by the laws." And does not an early Byzantine historian with legitimate pride contrast the servile state of the Eastern monarchies with the favoured and privileged freedom of a subject of the empire? Again, do we not find in unexpected corners of some obscure and dull-witted chronicler, the expressions *respublica*, *τὸ δημόσιον*; showing how undying was the sense of righteous and responsible government even to the end, as pre-eminently the Roman ideal, contrasted with the exercise of monarchic power among the barbarian settlers?

Reason of our limits: empire dead by 1081.

Thus if we compute the years from the foundation of the new capital we shall find ourselves in the last years of Emperor Basilius II. The Roman constitution then lasted until the end of the first quarter of the eleventh century; and this conjecture of Zonaras is borne out in every detail by the narrative of Michael Psellus. This work of recent discovery and publication throws a flood of new light upon the Byzantine administration in that age, which Finlay (with his usual unerring intuition) terms the "Epoch of Conservatism on the eve of Decline." For just at that time the great change took place from vigorous personal government to the evils of seclusion and chamberlain-rule. An effective and on the whole conscientious "Shogunate" had marked nearly the whole of the tenth century—that century which in all the annals of Byzantium stands in most welcome and conspicuous contrast with the riot and welter of contemporary States. But towards the close of the century Basil, half-monk, half-warrior, recovers his full heritage; and the succession of his brother, Constantine IX. (I adhere to Gibbon's enumeration), was as the succession of Arcadius to Theodosius. The outspoken appeal of Synesius of Cyrene to that

Reason of our limits: empire dead by 1081.

prince, buried in the *penetralia* of the palace, would have been quite in place if addressed by Psellus to the ninth Constantine six hundred years later. The revolving cycle of the fates had once more brought round a very similar crisis: and the recovery which the Comnenian House was able to effect by a feudal and military revolution only stayed for a time this inevitable decline. As with Justinian, the brilliance of the twelfth century concealed a fatal weakness, and exposed once more to the "Feringhi" the empire; which, though it had staved off Teuton and Avar, Muslim and Russian inroad, fell a victim to a predatory raid, led by one of its oldest and most devoted vassals.—I am in no way concerned to support the credit of Valens the astrologer: he adroitly fixed on a distant date, when the miscarriage of his prophecy could be attended by no personal inconvenience. But it is one of the chief objects of these essays and the retinue of appendices, to bring out the prevalent opinion of the subjects of the empire—whether the secret and wholesale incrimination locked in the bureau of one I would fain believe was not the historian of the Vandal and Gothic wars; or the openly expressed clamour of the mob; or the solemn pretension of some usurper, setting before his cause the ancient prestige of the Senate, the crying needs of state-defence, or (as in the revolt of Thomas) the communistic demands of an angry Asiatic "Jacquerie." What did the subjects of the Roman Empire really think of their system and their rulers? And if Zonaras agrees with Psellus (who is less explicit in his condemnation)—that the real constitution ended with Basil II., we may perhaps attribute without exciting surprise some significance to the date of Valens. We shall hope to point out the curious development of the reigns of the tenth and the eleventh Constantine—the change long prepared indeed and secretly working but then overt and unconcealed;—and the last stage when the purely feudal and patrimonial idea seizes upon and submerges the poor rem-

nant of "republican" tradition. For the annals of the principate after the accession of Alexius I. belong to mediæval and European history; but the thread that connects Basil II. with Constantine, Trajan, and Augustus, is not yet snapped. Others may tell of the exploits of the Comnenians and Palæologi; but I trace the merits, the failures, the achievements of no noble or princely family. It is the impersonal interest in the commonwealth and its destinies which forms the theme, embodied as it is in personal representatives; and the imperceptible and gradual transformation changing its outline but never altering its countenance beyond recognition.

Reason of our limits: empire dead by 1081.

§ 6. I feel that something should be said for the *form* of the work. It has been quite deliberately chosen, both for this modest venture on political analysis and for an earlier volume of theological studies. I have myself found the value of such a division — the general and comprehensive survey which in its very nature must be largely subjective and indeed tentative, suggestive, however its sentences may seem to lapse into occasional dogmatism—and the minuter detail, dealing with a special point of limited interest and application, supported by no vague footnote reference but by the "veriest words" (so far as the textual critic will allow) of the ancient writer. I am fully aware that no amount of direct citation will ever compensate for want of first-hand acquaintance, in the perusal of these writings as a whole; but the whole emphasis of a subjective appreciation of a period has been too often interrupted and lost in histories by the conscientious pains of the student and the leaden sediment of footnotes—which in our heart of heart we distrust by instinct yet have rarely the leisure to verify. For however important is the strict and accurate recital of campaigns, of embassies, of the rise and fall of ministries, the exact and truthful fixing of some particular date——it cannot be denied that in the end we are no further after all our pains than Sallust in his airy

Tentative and subjective task of the political theorist.

Tentative and subjective task of the political theorist.

narrative of the Jugurthan wars, or some later annalist who might tell us that Heraclius or Leo or Charles marched against the enemies, Persian or Arab or Saxon, and after killing "many mortals and capturing many cities" was in the end victorious. It must not be for a moment supposed that I disparage this accuracy, or the labours of Tillemont or of Clinton. I certainly do not believe that vague and *à priori* generalities upon an age (of which we have not patience to master the facts) can form a substitute for a genuine acquaintance; nor even a creditable rival. But I would maintain that the *objective* and the *subjective* treatment of history form two essentially separate departments of the scholar's activity; yet they should be united in the inquirer, though they must not operate at one and the same time.

The limitations and the peril of this *subjective*—or better perhaps the would-be didactic—method are clear, and must be freely conceded by any one bold enough to venture on the enterprise; yet it is the sole and unique vehicle for what is termed "political philosophy"—the mind working at tentative suggestions upon material stored up and accumulating during many years. We still read with admiration and delight Hegel's "Philosophy of History": who can deny that he has learnt more from one page of his audacious generalities, his subsuming of events coercively under his preconceived categories, than from the dry recital of the most severely conscientious historians? A writer should know when to expatiate freely in a larger atmosphere, and when to tie himself down with a certain ascetic rigour to exact statement and careful reproduction of competent witness. In the former there lurks always a kind of self-conscious irony: he is well aware that he is then stating the effect that phenomena produce on himself, is not conducting the reader with him into the "core" and the hidden nature of the phenomena. He bears no incontestable passport into a bygone age; he must always remain himself, and the child of his own age. In the survey of the

Tentative and subjective task of the political theorist.

distant landscape huge traits and features must lie for ever concealed from his gaze. He is drawn to generalise upon a single instance, if it seem to support some pet theory of what "must have been"; and to pass unheeding through the silent yet reproachful ranks of witnesses to whom for his own purpose he will remain wilfully deaf. This collection of essays will therefore be a timid attempt to preserve the precise frontiers of the two methods. In the former or larger type I shall be satisfied beyond my hopes if I can suggest, interest, and stimulate, if it only be to question and opposition; for the subjective historian must not expect to do more. A certain epoch is mapped out for a cadastral or ordnance survey; this, in the first place, is an artificial and personal caprice; for time, like existence, is solid, unbroken, and continuous. And the student finds that such a circumscription cannot strictly be maintained; he will have to recur in a diagnosis of the now clamorous symptom to the "still small voice" of earlier hints and intimations. He will feel sympathy with the conscientious annalist of older days who began from the Deluge or the Siege of Troy. Every period will be found to overlap another, and he must often incur the blame of "vain repetitions." As his confidence in the wisdom of his trenchant limit evaporates, he will look disconsolately at the finished chapter which so imperfectly represents, not the subject indeed (that of course), but even his own opinion of it. Such is the reaction which must be experienced by every genuine student of the wider issues of humanity. The scholar is safer though more fettered in a narrow field; and fields of inquiry grow perforce narrower every day. Yet there must always be place in the growing impatience at mere accurate minuteness of chronicles, in the stifling accumulation of fresh material, in the extraordinary failure of conscious intention in history, in the ironical play of Destiny with the sapient calculations of chief actors and statesmen, for some such subordinate part as the rôle of the philosophical onlooker.

A historian's self-control and limited range; lays no claim to universal criticism.

§ 7. Such a task must in the very nature of the case show traces of amateur-work. Engrossment in a special line is not the best training for adapting the resulting study into the rest of human knowledge. There must be a sort of intellectual "clearing-house." To say that this is the very highest kind of mental work is not to speak the truth. If highest means useful, then it is obviously untrue; for human advance on the present lines of civilisation (I am not saying they are the best possible) depends entirely upon the self-sacrifice of the worker, sharply cutting off, not merely his own tiny sphere of activity, but his own mind as well, from fascinating aberration into "Elsewhere." Clearly, and by any standard, the best and highest should be marked by certainty and by completeness, to which qualities political retrospect and prophecy can lay no claim. It is simply a play of a somewhat serious fancy—dealing, it may be, without profound conviction or even interest with the future of the race, and hazarding in purely human guess-work at the dim forces and obscure development going on behind the scenes, on which kings and warriors are playing their part amidst the obvious interest of "alarums and excursions." And once more, a historian too often lays claim to an impossible omniscience. It is not conceivable to-day, for instance, that any one man can be a trustworthy guide and critic in the development of campaigns and foreign policy; the real question at stake in religious discords, in the art or letters of a given epoch, or in the economic and fiscal issues, which were no doubt almost as obscure and tentative to the actors then as they appear to us; lastly, in the sympathetic elucidation of the matter and spirit of ancient writers, and the discrimination of the genuine text. The following pages will be found singularly lacking in vigorous and sustained narrative, either of battles, of palace intrigues, or of religious controversy. War is a simple matter in its immediate cause or even profounder motive; it may usually be traced to the cynical dislike of a near neighbour and

to the silent but effective protest of a baffled mercantile interest. But to analyse in its stages and its manœuvres demands the expert and the strategist, and not the student; and I shall not (at least willingly) surrender myself to the vain and idle function of the Roman youth, who in his academic theses gave grave and well-meant advice to Hannibal, how best he could profit by the victory at Cannæ. Nor have I anything to say about the religious debates and discords which form so prominent a feature in the earlier period. That interest would seem to belong to quite a different department of the mind from that faculty exercised in our present inquiry. It is enough to recognise that political interest largely subsided among a population naturally subtle and excitable, because of the eager study of transcendental questions and the strange half-racial and half-religious bitterness which arose from these dogmatic niceties. That this ecclesiastical interest diverted men from direct solicitude for affairs, I cannot doubt; though the charge often levelled at Christianity that it instilled in its votaries contempt for the actual world and left the field open to tyranny and the servile virtues, cannot be for a moment maintained.

A historian's self-control and limited range; lays no claim to universal criticism.

Indeed, this very point might be taken as an instance of the danger of approaching a special epoch with much modern prejudice, with only a hazy outlook on the vast tracts of history lying beyond the favoured province. It is difficult indeed to simplify and still be accurate; to generalise and yet do justice to the whole array of complex facts. And yet there is substantial truth in the old commonplace that the Eastern mind turns away from the world, and the Western tries to make the actual better. I have elsewhere (in my "School of Plato" and the "Bampton Lectures" of 1905) drawn attention to the very early drift of Greek thought (not to mention Oriental) away from nature and the State, floating upwards through a somewhat chilly and intangible ether to the Absolute; and I trust I may be spared, after this present excursion into a more concrete

A historian's self-control and limited range; lays no claim to universal criticism.

region, to continue to complete and to justify at greater length the thesis there upheld. It is as easy to prove (or rather adduce arguments) that Western Christianity was the unique instrument in the maintenance of all civil institutions, all arts and culture worthy of the name, as it is to show that the Eastern fraction perished in a somewhat lengthy death-struggle, of the poison of Christian abstentionism. Nothing would have made the Eastern Christian rate ordinary virtues above speculative retirement; and nothing, as it might appear, would fit the Oriental from Orontes to Ganges for the debate and execution of commonplace public business. It lay in the adaptability and sovereign efficacy of the Gospel that it ministered alike to the Oriental love of truth and the Roman love of order and law. It will be interesting to note the comparatively trifling influence which Greece exerted over Byzantium; the brief moments of Hellenic predominance in the administration are rare, ineffective, and only so, significant. It is impossible to attach blame to the Church, because of the modification which a quietist, yet curious and metaphysical temperament, introduced into the creed. This, in spite of its transcendental basis, which is indispensable, is simple and "democratic" in its influence, appeal, and instruction. I have already dwelt too long on this instance of the limitation from which even the most comprehensive of historians must suffer, if he attempt to do full justice to an age in its entirety—in its totality as it stands; to the origin and springs, not merely the phases and aspects of its development. Recognising the prohibitive Socratic warning against intrusion into uncongenial themes, I have resolutely limited by my instinct and inclination the scope of the inquiry pursued in the following pages. And so far as is possible in such a matter where few but notable pioneers are beckoning, I have not essayed a task which has been before successfully attempted within similar limits, nor have I consciously built upon another man's foundation.

BOOK I

THE PAGAN EMPIRE: THE CIVILIAN MONARCHY AND THE MILITARY REACTION

CHAPTER I

THE REIGN OF DOMITIAN AND THE ERA OF THE EARLIER ANTONINES (81–180 A.D.)

A. First "Flavian" House:

VESPASIANUS	69–79	milit. nom.
TITUS (son)	79–81	birth.
DOMITIANUS	81–96	birth.

B. Adoptive or Antoninian Period:

M. COCCEIUS NERVA	96–98	senat. nom.
NERVA TRAJANUS (Spain)	98–117	adoption.
ÆLIUS HADRIANUS	117–138	? adopt.
TITUS ANTONINUS I. PIUS	138–161	adopt.
MARC. AURELIUS ANTONINUS II.	161–180	adopt.
M. ANTONINUS III. VERUS	161–169	adopt.

Difficult position of Domitian.

§ 1. THE accession of Domitian, the second son of Vespasian, marks without doubt an important date in the history of Rome, and the development of that fluid and complex idea, Cæsarism. He was neither the first plebeian that occupied the place of a divine family—his father and brother had sat there already; nor was he the first youth who without any but honorary office and titular dignity had been lifted to the most responsible post in the State. The intentions of Augustus, that great master of irony and opportunism, had been veiled in obscurity; he had adopted his two grandchildren, he had put a ring on the finger of Agrippa, and he had summoned the reluctant Tiberius to be the mainstay of his declining years. But it cannot be definitely asserted at any given moment that he had decided on a successor; or indeed that his views of a monarchy which looks to us so monumental and secular were sufficiently clear to allow him to arrange for the future with any certain prevision. In the peaceful advent of Tiberius, a tried and notable

Difficult position of Domitian.

general, a sedate and austere citizen of the earlier type, a member of an historic house—there was nothing strange. If the commonwealth desired to accumulate once more in a single hand the tangled skein of administration, *discerpti membra monarchi*, no one would seem more suitable than the "son" of the late prince, who with his splendid record of State-service had no need to appeal to the "adoption of a dotard" and the intrigues of an empress-mother. Augustus had been aware that the constitution of the State was the reverse of definite; he looked forward to a renewal of the struggle for personal power, and in his final words to Tiberius named three or four possible competitors. For nothing in the letter or custom of the State forbade the free election of any Roman citizen; and the "dynastic" precedent into which the succession thus settled was distinctly contrary to the spirit and intention of the State, in founding this novel and exceptional function. Nor did Tiberius, the unhappy Priam of his house, have occasion to determine between his son by adoption and his son by blood; death and conspiracy swept away the children of Germanicus and left but one to carry on the line. With Caius enters on the scene a character with which we are all familiar—the "purple-born," the irresponsible Cæsar of fiction and dramatic situation. We have no desire to dispel any of the charm or fascination which may attract the modern mind to a contemplation of the past; but it is a fact that this favourite of romance, who unites unlimited power and dazzling wickedness, appears but seldom in the imperial purple. We may compute the reigns of these spoilt sons of destiny, who combined an early training in the palace, or its immediate neighbourhood, with premature tendencies to vice; but if we take a liberal estimate and include the reigns of Caius, of Nero, of the fourth, fifth, and eighth Antonines, and of Carinus, we shall find, down to the extinction of the Western line, only forty-two years so occupied out of five centuries. Indeed, for this

kind of sovereign the Roman constitution had in truth no place; and it will be found on closer or impartial inspection that many of such heroes of melodrama were in public life adroit, painstaking, and conscientious. And from that list we have withdrawn, in common fairness, all those coldly dignified heirs, like the second Constantius or the sons of Theodosius—all those promising lads, whom by some strange freak soldiers or senate or people sent to occupy the magistracy created expressly for a veteran. Into the list of Cæsars, popularly deemed to be typical of the remainder, we cannot admit the brief and pathetic reign of Alexander or the younger Gordian; and it must be confessed that the long minority of the third Valentinian belongs to a different category altogether, and was rendered possible by circumstances which had profoundly modified the primitive conception of Cæsar and his function. And we cannot embrace Domitian under this head; though he laboured under the double disadvantage of plebeian birth and untried merit, he was a personal ruler such as the commonwealth demanded from the outset in the elevation of an Augustus. Other youthful princelings might reign because they were their noble father's own sons, which for the vulgar, naturally loyal to a family, is often quite sufficient reason. But while his father had lived long enough to be the second founder, the "Camillus" of the early empire, and to strike profound respect into the minds of carping senators and sages, his success had not blotted out the memories of his origin. From the decisive recognition of Vespasian to the accession of the third Flavian, barely ten years had elapsed. Men scarcely past middle age could remember the brilliance of Nero's court—that age of the gods, as Pliny the Elder seems to convey, after which men fell with a painful drop into the respectable and humdrum work of middle-class reorganisation. Domitian reigned longer than any other successor of Tiberius; and in spite of the natural relief felt by the Senate and

Difficult position of Domitian.

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the apocryphal exultation of Apollonius of Tyana, it may be doubted whether the blow of Stephanus was a public benefit. This son of a "parvenu," early accustomed to the immunity of an imperial prince (*tantum licentiam usurpante*), hated and (worse still for his peace of mind) despised as an upstart by the nobles, exerted a vigilant and unexpected control over the imperial destinies. He entered indeed into all the fatal heritage of mutual distrust and suspicion which embittered the relation of the Senate and its Chief Executive. But he entered too into the great Augustan tradition; and was no unworthy representative of the first political constitution that ever accepted as watchwords—peace, justice, order, and plenty. Emperors of later times and better personal character praised him for his choice of ministers; and in the vapid pages of Augustan writers we find the idle discussion of an insoluble question, whether a prince's private virtues were necessary to the public welfare?

Completes Vespasian's task and made Antonines possible.

§ 2. We are amazed at the curious faculty for painstaking administration and humane considerateness, lying so often dormant in a luxurious or lethargic Roman, until the fullness of time came, and the hour struck for the destined saviour of society. With his disabilities, ascending after an untried or suspected youth a throne owed to the dynastic principle yet unacknowledged, Domitian guides the helm with success, and earned the gratitude of the provinces. Tacitus quietly subtracts from his own life the fifteen years during which he lost all claim to be deemed a member of the human race, after which (in a famous simile) he wandered about in a world unknown, a mere ghost of his former self, "his own survivor." Yet there is no trace of settled or deliberate oppressiveness in the government of Domitian. The atmosphere of the Senate alone is sultry; and on issuing from the dignified prison, Tacitus may well have felt like the prisoner of the Bastille, at the sudden recovery of unwonted liberty. The reign of

Completes Vespasian's task and made Antonines possible.

Domitian (so far as we may judge) is an integral part of the great reconstruction by Vespasian which rendered possible the golden age of the Antonines. We shall discuss elsewhere (and it may be too often) the debated question, whether indeed public order is the first mandate of the subject to its chosen rulers; whether it may not be purchased too dearly by the degradation of an historic assembly, by the ruthless and systematic silencing of all protest and opposition. It is a question which is not likely to receive effective settlement here or elsewhere; nor is an idle and perilous fallacy of the earlier eighteenth century, that the sword of public order swings only in the hands of tyrants, likely to be accepted in our own time. A republic is, as Machiavelli would have foretold four centuries ago, quite as stern and inexorable in putting an end to disorder, quite as panic-stricken before the suspicion of a plot. The chief events in the modern histories of commonwealths have been bloodily connected with the extinction of personal or communal liberties. But for the mass of mankind the great deliverance of the years 69 and 70 from the old triumviral, three-cornered anarchy, and from serious barbarian menace, was welcome and recent enough to make impossible any serious fault-finding with a strong and determined government. The class of thinkers, or posers whose lives were spent in a futile and permanent opposition; the discontented Roman satirist; the impractical Hellenic theorist, prating like the Bengali of the rights of man and the beauty of freedom—these might be excused if, after shifting the burden, they essayed to criticise the attitude of one who bore it valiantly. Yet the truth remains—the reign of Domitian (for all the story of the turbot and aristocratic dismay, the black hangings, the sudden summons and the goblin dancers) put the coping-stone on the work of his father. For this is the record of the Flavian house: a blunt and straightforward reorganisation on economic and middle-class lines, a wave of personal and perhaps scarce merited

Completes Vespasian's task and made Antonines possible.

popularity, and fifteen years of thorough and attentive work. "Cæsar Borgia," says Machiavelli, "was accounted cruel, but it was to that cruelty that he was indebted for the advantage of uniting Romagna to his other dominions, and of establishing in that province peace and tranquillity, of which it had been so long deprived." The succeeding age of virtuous and plausible princes reaped the advantage both of the work of Domitian and of its reaction. The removal of the pressure caused unbounded relief, but its effects continued.

Position of the Senate; its revived dignity.

§ 3. The Roman throne had been occupied in turn by a madman, a harmless lunatic, an artistic monomaniac, without any serious dislocation; it recovered, as we have noticed, its wonted good behaviour and equilibrium under the Flavians. Although the terrible year of anarchy taught the notable lesson that Rome was not in fact the king-maker, indeed, could not continue to be even in theory, yet silence and contentment settled upon the provincial armies, residuary legatees of an extinct or effete house; and the Senate has all its rights restored, and ceremonies still dearer. The age of the virtuous emperors realises as nearly as may be the most generous ideal of Augustus; a chief magistrate deferential and courteous to his peers, firm and equitable executive of their decrees after due consultation, yet not given to outwearing their patience with the minute detail of administrative routine. Now with our very modern and new-found distrust of representative institutions, with the spectacle before us of the nullity and fiasco of much honest endeavour to arrive at or give effect to the popular will, we must inquire a little closely into the credentials of the Roman Senate to elect not merely a president of their own body, but a world-ruler; for in this light very early in his career was Cæsar regarded. It must be at once allowed, it could claim very little right indeed to speak in the name of the habitable globe! The Senate represents the old exclusive aristocratic clan-government which emerged from the coalition of patriarchs or heads of houses. As elsewhere, so too in Rome this body elected and

recognised a chief, deposed him, broke up his scattered prerogative among a jealous college of officials; and finally, discovering that the result was in the end civil war, acquiesced like pious Isis in the reaggregation of these powers in one semi-divine, certainly superhuman, repository. But the empire owed its origin to a *knightly* or commercial reaction against a rival or against incompetence; and to the half-articulate voices of provincial protest against an administration which (to say the least) was in the strictest sense unprincipled. The Indian manifesto of that gifted politician and consummate ruler, Queen Victoria, supplied just the same nameless and intangible guarantee which the dependencies of Rome in East and West demanded and secured from the tactful personality of Augustus. Responsible government was once more a reality; and the aim of his genuine successor was not to extend the frontier or widen the *pomœrium*, but to secure the property and contentment of all classes within the area already acquired. This task, it would seem, was pursued with steady perseverance down to the death of Nero; as witness let us appeal to the high character, the sincere kindliness, the sense of serious accountability, which mark the Roman official in the somewhat hostile documents of the New Testament. Interrupted by the military orgy which ensued thereon, the Flavian reconstruction, as we have seen, took up the task and carried it to a severe completion. Into the labours of these indefatigable men the princes of the second century entered, doubtless with no very deep sense of gratitude. And the Senate, resuming its privilege, and not dreaming of innovating on the imperial system after the vain attempt on Caius' death, poses again as the arbiter of the world's fate.

Position of the Senate; its revived dignity.

§ 4. But it was the provinces and not Rome or indeed Italy that had profited by the establishment of a fixed and responsible government; and if we look closely we shall find that the effective and independent control of the Fathers was less felt during the period of the tender deference of the Antonines than

Senate not 'representative': 'apostolical succession' in imperial adoption.

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during that epoch of armed conflict and anarchy which marks the third century. The Senate, so far from being a true spokesman or representative of the world, stood for reaction, for privilege, and for immunity. If feudalism is in some sort a revival of the old family-state and the familiar regimen of a patriarch, the Senate may be compared to a lordless manor. It is equally exclusive; it has its own courts and officers; it defies the entry of a foreign trader or a king's messenger; it erects isolating barriers against outside influence. Only by means of the lord does it attain commerce with the outer world; or by the priest, who at least represents a ramifying and penetrative system somehow securing a unity in religious, which cannot be found in civil, affairs. But the emperor was intended by the Time-Spirit who called him to the post, to be the focus of the world, to annul distinctions and weld disintegrant forces into a harmony. And the choice of the universal ruler, even in this age of senatorial prestige, did not and could not fall into the hands of this narrow and prejudiced order.

The *imperium*, both in republican and monarchical days, was a magical gift which consecrated its possessor and could be transmitted intact. In this transmission was a sort of "apostolical succession"; and in a very genuine sense, the outgoing magistrate "created" the following. It would not be correct to say that the Romans with Hobbes maintained the irrevocable surrender of plenary power by the people, and watched in passive acquiescence the circulation of offices among the nobles, by a kind of spiritual co-optation. Still there are distinct points of resemblance in the two theories; and while the votes of the tribes were necessary to point the way, the essential ceremony lay with the officers already charged with a sacred power. A veritable and a real anarchy and arrest of government ensues upon the disappearance and death of the two chief magistrates. Thus the reign of the "five good emperors" is the

period of adoption or nomination, no doubt amid genuine senatorial contentment. If an adoptive son could enjoy equal rights with a son by birth, the emperor was able to transfer this usage to the political sphere—where, in spite of the military origin and disguised basis, his authority tended continually to usurp *parental* ideas in the eyes of men. During this age, a careful provision for the succession was the rule; and to ensure the peaceful continuance of the imperial policy was a first duty of the reigning sovereign. Elsewhere in imperial history, there are few signs of such forethought; the maxim of most might appear to be the apocryphal adage of Tiberius or Lewis XV., *ἐμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μιχθήτω πυρί.* The uncertainty in the character and transmission of the chief office is one of the most startling features in the whole history of Rome. While everything crystallises into hard and fast outline in other departments of life, this centre and pivot of the great artificial fabric is left a prey to chance, to the mutinous caprice of a few soldiers, to a midnight visit of a few senators to some dignified peer, to a hasty nocturnal marriage of some empress-dowager, to the venal clamour of some palace menials. At the death of a sovereign, the whole imperial destiny trembled in the balance; and it is quite credible that the choice of Julian's successor, amid the famine and distress of the Persian campaign, was a pure accident; and that the irrevocable salutation of the wrong Jovian by some hasty and ill-informed soldiers was really effective against the careful measures of the army-corps and the truest interest of the realm. When the empire stands to us for law, order, and regular method, it is not a little surprising to read that the Dardanian line, which gives us the world-wide renown and statuesque majesty of Justinian, arose (if we believe the legend) from the audacious fraud of an ignorant guardsman, intercepting for his own use the money intended to secure the election of the chief chamberlain's nominee. But in this age there is no

Senate not 'representative': 'apostolical succession' in imperial adoption.

reason to complain of the haphazard; the continuity is amply safeguarded until the moment when Marcus allows his parental prejudice to overpower his sense of public duty.

Problem—efficiency or stability? Evils of Absolutism: wise reserve-force of modern kingship.

§ 5. Granted that in the freest of communities there will always arise a need for a visible embodiment of the State, or for a final "sealer of decisions," the debate will circle continually around the contrasted advantages of *elective* and *hereditary* monarchy. Two conceptions of government will always coexist, sometimes intermingling, sometimes at variance; the *official* and the *patrimonial*, the republican and the royal. These roughly correspond to the significant distinction of Tacitus; the Germans "choose their kings by birth, their officers by merit" ("*reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt*"). If we have mastered all the meaning latent in this pregnant sentence, we have gone half-way in the understanding of those strange problems of history, the Frankish Majorat, the Japanese Shogunate, the Tibetan regent for the Dalai-Lama. The needs of a State demand two qualities in a central ruler which are rarely found united—efficiency and stability. Richard I. may be the popular hero of a hundred fights, but he cannot pose as the symbol of national unity, of settled policy, of guaranteed order. The retrenchment of monarchic prerogative is certainly due quite as much to an exaggerated and anxious respect (fearful of bringing the direct power of the crown into play in a dangerous arena) as to any supposed distrust of its influence as limiting and thwarting the popular will. It may be said frankly, and without fear of contradiction, that opposition to monarchic authority has never come from the people; but invariably from the interested section, of birth or science or wealth, who have found it convenient to limit personal government in favour of a "Venetian oligarchy"—such indeed as the Earl of Beaconsfield depicts to us in those novels, which amid all the obsolete political tracts or romances of the last century, alone retain

the charm of truth and novelty. Yet, it may be unhappily, the jealous and selfish desire to seclude the sovereign from public business and the people's gaze is reinforced by the general conviction; only by such elevation above the dusty level of party-fight, the petty issues of finance and coercion, can the safety and prestige of the monarch and the popular reverence be preserved. It is true that in the century which has passed since European equilibrium was painfully adjusted again in 1815, monarchy has gained incalculably in dignity and reserve-force. No longer, except perhaps in Russia, is the sovereign held directly accountable for the misdoings of his meanest agent, for the tyranny or exactions of the pettiest official. If the worst as well as the loftiest acts of government are done in the name of the sole constitutional fount of honour and authority, this is perforce entangled in every false step of a minister, every base act of a subordinate; a mighty and unsuccessful war, or an undeserved beating, are alike laid on the shoulders of the mild and humane recluse of Tzarskoe Selo. Elsewhere constitutionalism professes to curtail sovereign power by putting in commission its effective exercise; the result has been only to enhance its prestige. The eyes of the people turn expectantly in the deadlock of reform, the equilibrium of parties, the emergence of menacing and rudimentary factors in the situation, towards the powers dormant it may be but never expressly surrendered. No one who is conversant with average opinion throughout the country will deny that the sovereign of to-day is regarded as benevolently confronting, rather than as representing the government. This result, due no doubt largely to the personal character of English sovereigns since the Reform Bill, is also the natural effect of the policy of curtailment. "How much better," it is said, "would this matter," perhaps national education, "have been settled by royal tact, instead of the conscientious but aggressive and unconciliatory methods of rival parties!" It might well appear to-day as

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if the irritable deadlock (already noticed) were the normal condition of parliamentary nations; and that unpopularity were the natural lot of the chosen of the people! The system of party-government is founded on the negative and destructive theory, that the main duty of the opposition is to overthrow the ministry; and this avowed intention is reinforced by all the artificial malevolence of political commonplace; which, however, may teach actors and audience alike to take it seriously some day. The good-natured "give and take" of English social life, reflected also in its genuine political business, would become a thing of the past; and acrimonious class-warfare would succeed, with its violent oscillation of reaction, and of abrupt and brief reform. In any case, to-day the "State" stands before us naked and unabashed, as force: it merely coerces or taxes. Wherever an appeal is needed to the warm and impulsive sentiment of loyalty or patriotism, it is sought in the institution of royalty. While the sovereign has technically to endorse the government of the hour, he represents august permanence as against tentative effort, harmony and respect as against spite. Kingship stands "over against" parliamentary institutions with a new title to affection.

I am not indeed concerned with the sage tractates of political philosophers, who have strangely supposed that the new voters would but endorse their peculiar and academic views. No one familiar with the temper of the people, with the vogue of the wider press, can doubt that there exists a very prevalent desire, as there emerges an occasional appeal, that a sovereign should *govern* as well as *reign*. In the background lies the intense human interest in a person and a family—which at least in some quarters of the globe will continue to attract. Democratic epochs (if my remark be permitted by the falsified prophets and pioneers of the movement) are swayed not by reason or idealism, but by frank self-interest, which sees no cause for disguise, and by

sentiment. The stability of our commonwealth depends upon this *parental* fiction, by which the sovereign absorbs largely of the characteristics and attachment of a father. And lineage plays an important part; it throws back the roots of our institutions far into the national history, and interests the vulgar in the ordinary happenings of family life. In the revival of the monarchic instinct this latter consideration has much weight; and the social apostle of to-day preaches to deaf ears of the colourless "rights of man," which resolves a community into antagonistic and resilient atoms. For in such an ideal, in this apotheosis of isolation, this fact is overlooked: that man only begins to be human with the family.

Problem—efficiency or stability? Evils of Absolutism: wise reserve-force of modern kingship.

§ 6. The citizen of the philosopher is too often a mere fancy portrait of the noble savage, or of Hobbes' primitive man. It is the serious drawback and indeed final condemnation of the "republican" form of government, that it appeals to a theory instead of a sentiment, to calculation instead of immediate feeling. Now a precise theory of life is beyond the reach and the leisure of the average man; and I must repeat again that democracy means the active and growingly intelligent co-operation of the ordinary citizen in affairs: it does not imply an unlimited confidence reposed in a Long Parliament, a Committee of National Safety, a "ministry of all the talents," or a scientific directorate of experts in electricity or sanitation. The other scheme demands great patience and forbearance; but it proceeds on the "democratic" assumption that the people's voice, will, and genuine feeling is worth eliciting—that the heart is naturally in the right; and that the cement of a nation and empire composed of strangely compacted and often hostile fragments, is found in free intercourse, in a frank confidence, in the good sense of the people. But, it is said with Hegel, that government is a task for the professional class only and is far above the heads of the mass.

Fallacy: democracy identified with success of a minority or scientific committee.

Fallacy: democracy identified with success of a minority, or scientific committee.

Nothing indeed would seem to excite greater fear in certain circles than the suggestion of direct "referendum." Now if government is to be the scientific regimentation of the human drove, according to gradually opening laws of physical development, we must regret the introduction of the delusive franchise, which will suggest to the poor freedom and not serfage. But we may leave this subject of the irreconcilable feud between the scientific and the democratic attitude, and the possibly overt rupture in the immediate future. We may premise that such an episode is by no means irrelevant in a survey of the imperial system; for all systems are latent there, and nothing is here out of place that is modern, and therefore in a sense its offspring. The empire from a gracious, impartial, and ubiquitous supervision of local units, developed into a gigantic and costly scheme of regimentation; and though we must be careful not to attach blame of intent, or *malice prepense*, to a natural and inevitable development, we can see the peril attaching to a world of dutiful puppets, trained to look aloft for every movement and principle, and ungratefully resenting this parental tutelage only in the wild moments of annoyance and of failure.

We must return to our contrast of the *official* and *hereditary;* dignity conferred by virtue of office, or by right of birth. The Emperor Paul I. represents the revolutionary spirit of Machiavellian State-absolutism rather than mere Oriental tyranny, when he denied nobility to any "boyar" with whom he was not at the moment conversing. This is the conceit of centralism gone mad; but it represents the *reductio ad absurdum* of the entire republican principle. Human society is not for them (as in effect we know it to be) a group of families, but an aggregate of hostile units—of the resilient atoms we mentioned above. And power for them does not grow naturally enough out of parental control, but is an artificial expedient due to the inherent malevolence and

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cowardice of man. It depends on no emotional basis, and acts by no moral suasion as the expressed will of a father; but rests on a reasoned theory of life (which may well sadden the generous believer in mankind) and upon compulsion and force. Alone of authorities in modern times the royal figure operates by this moral sanction and appeal. In other spheres of State is not a government just the short-lived triumph of a vindictive minority?

Fallacy: democracy identified with success of a minority or scientific committee.

§ 7. Cæsar was not slow to clothe himself, at least for the eyes of a large part of the subject-class, in the dignified robes of parent and father. Yet the fiction of "choice of the best man," and the experience of the young scions of the Claudian and Flavian families, prevented any overt recognition of this right; and the genuine character of the ancient adoption atoned for the irregularity, as we should term it, in the accession to the chief post. And Cæsar was first and foremost an untiring executive. He was to be Teutonic "duke" as well as "king"; leader that is, chosen for personal merit as well as succeeding by some mysterious right of lineage or adoption. If, as we have before maintained, efficiency is the State-aim (effectiveness at all costs, and with scant respect or gratitude to the agent who is broken or ruined in the task), government is a mere Temple of Aricia, the emperor the priest who wins, and must vacate his place, by a crime. Against this coldly practical and merciless view, the parental or family feeling makes signal protest. At any cost, the abiding sanctity of the embodied State must be maintained—the "king can do no wrong"; and the centre must remain ever, like the supreme fount of being in Plotinus, unruffled and at rest.

Moral appeal and parental attitude under Antonines: elements of decay: evil influence of the Porch.

Certainly, during the second century everything told in favour of this latter principle. The ground was well prepared (indeed well mown) by the judicial or judicious murders of Domitian's later years—that reign of terror and suspense of which Tacitus has left so poignant an account. The second century

Moral appeal and parental attitude under Antonines: elements of decay: evil influence of the Porch.

is the period for the efflorescence of a new school of Greek letters; which, while it revived almost every branch of literary venture, may yet be said to start in the philosophical speculation of Plutarch, and to culminate in the rarefied altitude of Plotinus. Classical Latinity (if the strange and allusive "Spanish" dialect of Tacitus and Juvenal deserve the name) expires and leaves no trace; until the great Gaulish school, which salutes the early successes of Diocletian's tetrarchy, and lasts on through Ausonius and Sidonius to the chronicles of the deeds or lethargy of Merwings and Carolings. Such a revival is nearly always in history unfavourable to the prosaic value of local liberties. With this age, as Pliny's experience in Bithynia displays, begins the Curial decay, which replaces (as with ourselves to-day) the State-functionary for the local bailiff—and Cæsar, as lord paramount, for the obsolete civic pageant of the *duumvirs*. The brisk and alert intelligence of Italian merchant and man of letters gladly welcomed the unscrupulous "parvenu" to unlimited power. The growth of intelligence is in many natures, classes, and climes largely fatal to the free institutions, which do so little and occupy much time. For interest in public affairs is, it must be confessed with regret, but a transient phase in human history. It is true of democracy no less than of monarchy, with which it has so much in common, that it takes the earliest opportunity of retiring from the active exercise of those functions, for which it clamoured so loudly.

The wars and threatened inroads, and above all the pestilence of Marcus' reign, complete a picture which is by no means encouraging. It is easy to detect the signs of weakness and the secret of future misfortune.

But this section would be incomplete without a longer reference to that pathetic figure of the Platonic "philosopher-king." The three successors of Nerva represented the Roman genius in its many aspects—the brave soldier, the artistic traveller and minute administrator, the "paterfamilias" in his kindest

mood of fatherly geniality. But with Aurelius we enter a new atmosphere of despondent satiety and morbid introspection. He is the presage of a new world and of Hellenic influence; he had drained the cup of wisdom, as Tacitus would say, far more freely than befitted a Roman and a senator. I cannot but attribute much of the later inaction and pessimism of the higher classes to the sinister influence of the philosophy of the Porch, and the spectacle of Marcus' scrupulous unselfishness. Marcus did all because it was a duty—a reasoned duty; the application to the given case of some vague axiom of cosmic significance—such as Epictetus bade the practitioners keep always ready and unsheathed for use. But gladness and spontaneity had flown; and the solemn suggestion that the sage alone *understood* the world was the most laughable pretension. To speak truth, it was to him alone unintelligible. The vulgar got from nature and instinct a working hypothesis which served them very well. But the twin maxims of negation, "Bear and forbear," signified this and nothing else; that the sage abandoned his interest in the State or in the world of nature; he could not reform, and he must not enjoy. Stoicism, a Phenician, anti-Hellenic system, represents not the healthy secularism of the Jew, but the passive abstention of the Buddhist. It was welcomed for a space in Greece and put on a network of logical sophistry and technical phrase; but it found a real and abiding home only in the breast of the Roman nobleman, who fell on evil times when his services were no longer needed. I do not forget the pious apostrophes of the "dear city of Zeus," and the beautiful personal touches which illumine a crabbed style and a negative creed; but the plain teaching of the Porch is indifference—in the most varied application of that term. The gospel of duty must be reinforced by a real belief in the value and perfectibility of man—not the race merely, but the individual. "Duty for duty's sake" is a mere unmanly surrender to Fatalism, or to arbitrary and

Moral appeal and parental attitude under Antonines: elements of decay: evil influence of the Porch.

Moral appeal and parental attitude under Antonines: elements of decay: evil influence of the Porch.

unexamined dictates of some tyrant in heaven or on earth. It is the chief pride of man only to bestow homage where it is deserved, and to judge securely the inspiration of the oracle by the value of the message. It is ominous of the coming peril that the list of the "five good emperors" is closed by one, who is as wearied of the *sameness* of this brilliant and variegated world, as any neurotic poet who to-day makes himself out more interestingly morbid and depraved than he is. The cult of this dead and mechanical universe will give place in the third century to the more genial worship of the sun—Mithra and Isis will take the place of Fate; Elagabalus and Aurelian alike (the two antipodes of the whole imperial line) will dress the altars of Phœbus. And Roman spirit, and it must be confessed moral behaviour, will revive—not in the lecture-room of Aurelius or Gallienus, but amid the din of arms and alarums, and in that new seriousness of a regenerate and repentant Senate.

CHAPTER II

THE PSEUDO-ANTONINES; OR, THE AFRO-SYRIAN HOUSE AND THE REGIMEN OF WOMEN (180–235 A.D.)

Luc. Aurel. Commod. Antoninus IV.	180–192	birth.
Helvius Pertinax	193	senat. nom.
Didius Julianus I.	193	milit. nom.
Pescennius Niger (in Syria)	193–194	milit. nom.
Clodius Albinus (in Brit.)	193–197	milit. nom.
C. Afro-Syrian House and Pseudo-Antonines:		
L. Septimius Severus I. (Afric.)	193–211	milit. nom.
M. Aurelius Antoninus V. ("Caracallus," son)	211–217	birth and 'adoption.'
Antoninus VI. Geta. (brother)	211–212	birth.
M. Opilius Macrinus	217–218	milit. nom.
Antoninus VII. Diadumenianus	218	birth.
M. Aurel. Antoninus VIII. ("Elagabalus," son of A.V.)	218–222	milit. nom. and 'birth.'
M. Aurel. Severus II. Alexander	222–235	birth.
L. Jul. Aur. Uranius Antoninus IX. (in East).		

Anomalous character of the Pseudo-Antonines.

§ 1. In all the annals of the Roman Empire there is no epoch so full of surprises, hazards, and anomalies as the half-century following the death of Marcus Aurelius. Elsewhere we can trace with some security the general motives, felt or expressed, which governed the avowed policy of statesmen or the secret current of affairs; the needs of the empire calling forth a series of devoted generals and unveiling the thin disguise of the military basis of power; the ensuing desire to safeguard the person of the sovereign; the degrees and stages of civilian or soldierly hierarchy interposed between highest and lowest, like the mediating demons of the Neo-Platonist; the natural tendency towards dynastic predominance, or the supremacy of a certain family, by which the free-election of a chief magistrate and

Anomalous character of the Pseudo-Antonines.

embodied executive became the uncontested succession of some untried youth under tutors and governors; the sudden outburst of military bluntness and common sense, protesting against the money and effectiveness wasted in the shadows of a palace among unworthy menials; the gradual decline of a reigning house (which we note so consistently in Chinese annals) from an untiring and patriotic soldier, through a respectable civilian son to the inevitable "purple-born," in whom both at Rome and Constantinople the line comes to an abrupt end in a sudden catastrophe. But this period combines all the anomalies of the rest, and adds peculiar features of its own. It is possible to characterise it in a variety of ways, without finishing the portraiture. We may call it the continuation of the "Age of the Antonines," in which from Pius to Elagabalus (138–222) some eight monarchs enjoyed a title second only in dignity to Augustus and in popular esteem far surpassing it. We might again term it the period of feminine supremacy; for Marcia, Julia Domna, Mæsa, and Mammæa are in many respects the real rulers for over forty years (190–235). Or we might represent it as the age of the Jurists,—the period of the greatest legal brilliance in Roman history, one long chain of eminent humanitarian lawyers from Julianus under Hadrian to Ulpian under Severus II. just a century later—the golden age of those principles of civil justice and equitable administration, which formed the basis of all subsequent codes; until under Leo III. in the middle of the eighth century we see an alien and a religious influence striving for the mastery. Again, we might call it a new provincial reaction against Rome and Italy, laying stress on the barbarous Pœnic tongue of Septimius, the pronounced anti-Roman tendencies of his son, the fifth Antonine, the grotesque mimicry of Alexander of Macedon, and the hero-worship of Hannibal his compatriot; the Syrian descent and orgiastic cult of Emesa over-

powering the native deities of Rome, the Hellenistic sympathy of Alexander—not to mention the amazing Bacchantic riot of the young priest, and the half-mad, half-serious menace of Caracallus that he would give Rome to sack, for his Celtic and Scythian hireling troops. Once more, for the earlier portion (180–217) we might point to the significant repetition of the events that followed Nero's death, as if some inner and fatal necessity compelled each crisis to follow a similar development. We have the aged Pertinax, like Galba, stern with inopportune severity; the rapid disenchantment, and Julianus as another Otho expected to revive the showy brilliance of the last reign; and then the mighty protest from legions North and East, and the lingering struggle of three full years which challenges comparison with the sharper agony of the triumph of Vespasian; and this harsh and homely restorer of public order, whether his family be Septimian or Flavian, leaving two sons, one amiable, the other fierce and distraught, to quarrel over his grave; and the survivor to vanish by secret assassination after a suspicious and misspent reign. From the accession of Nero this fatal series of events unfolds itself in forty-two years; from that of Commodus in thirty-seven; and in each case the sovereignty is again thrown open for public competition. But it is instructive to watch the different issue of the story; Rome and the Senate reconquer their immemorial right on Domitian's death, often to be overridden but not as yet to be forgotten; but on the death of Antoninus V. power goes with the Eastern legions and their choice, tne remnants of the still popular house of Septimius. Thus, while the year 96 opens the period in which the ideal of the empire was best realised, the murder at Carrhæ in 217 introduces us suddenly to the strangest and most bizarre episode in all Roman history—the boy Augusti, Diadumenus, Elagabalus, Alexander, and a little later Gordian the Pious. But once more, this epoch, with the notable exception of Severus' reign

Anomalous character of the Pseudo-Antonines.

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(193–211), is the nadir of that personal government and responsibility which was the whole secret of the unlimited power and unlimited peril of the Roman emperor. It is the age of the Grand Vizierate, and of the retirement of the monarch, to the vigorous sports of the amphitheatre, to the distant frontier campaigns on Euphrates or Tyne, to the curious but costly nature-worship of a perverted schoolboy, to the careful and decorous nurture and education of a young Cæsar for a maturity, of which, alas! the world was never to reap the benefit. These are some of the features which compel our attention and astonishment; neither singly nor together do they exhaust the interest of the period, nor explain the amazing nature of its protest against Roman tradition. Everything that was un-Roman comes defiantly to the front; and in high places sit only the pretty minion of Commodus, the clever freedman Perennis or Cleander, the aged Syrian jurist and the youthful Syrian priest, the dark and malevolent African astrologer, the arrogant African Vizier Plautianus, with his eunuch-train (?) of noble Roman lads, the mad fratricide traversing the realm with his rioting band of mercenaries, like some mediæval captain or Condottiere, the crafty and bedizened Mæsa, and the mild but persevering apprentice at the perilous trade of sovereign rule. And withal, the great machine moves on of itself. We have the strange yet incontrovertible testimony of Dio Cassius that the episode of the Emesene boy-priest did not do any great harm; and we can well believe that the whole period is an instructive lesson on the insignificance of titular autocracy, and a caution to us to seek deeper for the causes of imperial stability amid these constantly shifting scenes of riot and of disorder. We must indeed trace the gradual process of decline; but we recognise with wonder the pertinacious vitality of a system that survived the fifth and eighth Antonine!

Chief imperial function; 'personal' service; the 'Grand Viziers.'

§ 2. We shall often have occasion to notice that the chief qualification of the prince embodying in himself the whole executive of the State was *personal* service. Any disguise of this autocracy, delegated in its plenitude by the Senate, was contrary to tradition; the emperor must work, and govern as well as reign. There was nothing *patrimonial* in the original conception of the empire. Though overclouded by forgetfulness, or deliberately superinscribed by foreign characters as on a palimpsest, there were always visible to a keen observer the lineaments of a city-state and a voluntary commission to a responsible magistrate.

The texture of modern society, the technical phrase of government and diplomacy, the tenure of a complicated land-system—all depend to a degree unsuspected, upon the fact or the fiction of territorial lordship. The king is the owner of his realm; he says with truth, "my ships," "my soldiers," and "my subjects"; and the title-deeds of every estate run at some distant point or other into the mythic or genuine postulate of a royal grant of conquered soil. On state occasions, even the English sovereign employs, with the approval of his liegemen, the language of undisguised autocracy; at a similar moment the Roman emperor would sink the personal pronoun, and in spite of all his power would speak as the duly selected and duly charged servant of the commonwealth. It is indeed no small support to our theory of the contrariness and elusive character of political power—that it is always the unexpressed and inexplicit that really holds the reins; and that to secure the quiet torpor or elimination of any dangerous element, there is but one course—openly to proclaim uncontested rights and sovereignty. For, as we must often remark, to recognise a source and seat of authority does not mean to actualise it; and the problem of real moment in any State, granting the negligible or academic question of royal or popular supremacy, is this, where resides the effective power?

Chief imperial function; 'personal service; the 'Grand Viziers.'

And those who in ethical or political studies have the courage to acknowledge, the patience to trace, the movements of the real repositories, will be amply repaid by a careful analysis of the history of Rome.

It cannot be doubted that one grave reason for the maintenance of Cæsar's autocracy, for its continual recovery after degradation or a minor's incompetence, was just this legend (if you will) of delegation and of responsibility. He was never recognised as the source, but only as the executive. Elsewhere, in some abstraction that men talked of, but did not trouble to particularise, dwelt original power that was freely entrusted, but to a removable nominee. Had this wholesome fable or fiction, as it often proved itself, been expelled, as early as our present epoch, by an overtly centralised system of some premature Diocletian, we could not certainly predict under such circumstance the long survival, the frequent rekindling, of the Cæsarian idea; not only as a vague principle of cosmopolitan union, but as an effective and vigilant control over rival and hostile races and creeds. No mere statuesque dignity would suffice for such a personal ruler; idleness or secluded indifference was a charge as dangerous and disconcerting as active cruelty. And it is therefore with considerable interest that we see the earliest trace of the Oriental conception of sovereignty in the very system which in its method and principle is the exact reverse. Let us first examine this negative fact, that during the greater part of this intermediate and transitional period the emperor did not control: except (as in the East) by fitful and spasmodic caprice, by the easy or reluctant sacrifice of an unpopular minister; who could not, by the very terms of the agreement between the republic and its chief magistrate, be accounted responsible, in the sense we intend to convey to-day. We have abundant proof of the disinclination of the son of Aurelius, or of Faustina, for the hard work incumbent on a Roman Cæsar. To him, supreme office was an opportunity not for

State-service, but for the indulgence of temperament. Commodus revived the athleticism of Nero without his artistic taste: and power fell naturally into the hands of a freedman, as it had done under Claudius. But that glutton for work, however secretly open to influence, had at least gone through the form of personal attention; while Commodus surrendered all business as irksome and beneath a prince's condescension. His reign—if it may be called a reign—is divided into three almost equal periods; two he terminated abruptly by the ready sacrifice of an unpopular vizier to public indignation, and the third ended by his own death at the hands of his intended victims. The career of Perennis closed in 185; that of Cleander in 189; the chief persons of influence at the court, Marcia, Eclectus, and Lætus, anticipated a similar fate on the last day of December 192. Four years of turmoil ensued, and the administration went on of itself with a certain indifference as to the ultimate winner. The success and the untiring activity of Severus did not however restore to him the personal control. He hastened to forestall a return of the disorder from which he himself emerged triumphant; he created his sons Cæsars and in course of time Augusti. And, as he revived the vagrancy of Hadrian, traversing with surprising speed the provinces and visiting the uttermost frontiers, he created Plautian, an African and perhaps a kinsman, vice-sovereign in a capital, which he had learnt to distrust. The reign of Severus has two sides—his own achievements in overcoming rivals, and in restoring public order and peace; and the court history of the intrigues of the palace, of the influence of Domna, and of the envious hate of Antoninus for the powerful minister, his father-in-law. Dismissing the tragical embellishments, we may be certain that the uncontrolled power and pride of the prefect during the itinerant years of Severus, excited in the populace the liveliest dislike; that he rebuked the wildness of the elder

Chief imperial function; 'personal' service; the 'Grand Viziers.'

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son; that the unanswerable charge of treason was trumped up; and that after a stormy interview, the impetuous lad of sixteen first himself attempted, and then entrusted to a soldier of the guard, the massacre of the minister.

Vice-emperors: legists and females.

§ 3. It is hard to decipher the feelings of Severus. It may be doubted if he was convinced of the guilt of Plautian. But after his son's violence it was too late for genuine reconciliation; and there was no place for a discarded prefect who had once enjoyed unlimited confidence. Severus regretted in the Senate the temptations of power, and lent support to the rumours of Plautian's seditious design. But he had now to take charge of the imperial education of his heirs (204); and he found in the control of two envious brothers a fit penalty for his abandonment of a faithful friend. He shared with many emperors of his severe and industrious character, a dislike of the capital. Four hundred years later a compatriot will again save the empire, and avenge the murder of a lawful prince; for it was from Carthage that Heraclius sailed in 610 to deliver the Eastern realm from the incompetent tyranny of Phocas. And both tried to humble or to sober the pretentious and incapable capital by proving that the safety and administration of the empire were independent of its approval or its splendours. Severus spent little time in Rome; and if we may believe Herodian, a scheme of separate spheres for the two young Augusti was debated after his death. It may well have been mooted in his lifetime, in the curiously un-Roman literary and religious salon of the Syrian empress. In any case, the last years of an active life spent in North Britain (208–211) taught nobles and people of the indolent and excitable city that the true duties of a prince lay elsewhere than in the senate or the circus, and that the heirs of power must be trained in the wholesome hardship of a camp. Heraclius, it will be seen, by his humiliating design of reversing Constantine's judgment,

begins a notable moral regeneration, which carries him through the costly campaigns against Persia, with something of the enthusiasm of a religious crusade. *Vice-emperors: legists and females.*

Meantime, the pretorian prefecture (oddly termed τὸ βασίλειον ξίφος by a frequenter of the imperial salon at the very moment when it was beginning to lose its military character) is divided between three colleagues; of whom Papinian, the Syrian, and it may be the relative of the empress herself, wielded the less conspicuous and civilian sway. This dignified jurist, trained in the great outpost of Roman law (which had somehow taken such firm root at Berytus), maintained a real influence into the reign of Antoninus Bassianus; and became his victim (if story be true) when he refused to imitate Seneca in defending a brother's murder by a studied speech. It seems clear that Domna preserved her matronly authority till the death of Antoninus at Carrhæ; and certainly usurped many of the duties, which no vagrant captain of an irresponsible militia could effectively exercise. With her death, the sway of female influence is by no means at an end. Macrinus, the hesitating and conciliatory emperor of an accident, is no match for the aged Mæsa and her treasures. After the brief and decisive fight the supposed son of Antoninus, assuming the same name, eighth and last of the series, arrives in Rome. He definitely hands over, it would seem, the cares of sovereignty to his grandmother, who sits as a παρέδρος near the consuls in the Senate; while he establishes a rival and feminine debating-house under the presidency of his mother Soæmias. He might multiply officers and give to the most obviously unfit the serious charge of prefect of the city; but his effective interference was slight and the Roman world went on its way, by virtue of those permanent services and institutions, which time and expediency had created to remedy such episodes of irresponsible caprice. Meantime the soldiers, whose regard

Vice-emperors: legists and females.

for the Syrian dynasty was genuine and unaffected, abhorred the effeminacy of the sun-priest. The potent trio of Emesene ladies, with whom lay the destinies of Rome, decided that the waning popularity of Soæmias' son must be reinforced by the adolescent promise of Alexianus. The emperor's mother, in a curiously significant appeal, overcame his natural suspicion of a pure-minded cousin, his instinctive dislike of a colleague, by suggesting that his divine duties gave him no leisure for the far inferior and yet urgent business of the State.

Lamaism (under Antoninus VIII.)

§ 4. We are here at once confronted by a situation singularly and typically Asiatic. It is the natural tendency for sovereignty to split asunder into the two irreconcilable elements of which it is composed. For sovereigns must in one aspect be the serene and motionless centre of Plotinus' metaphysics; and at the same time the vibrating sword or radius of the circle, to which no point in the circumference is unfamiliar. The one is holy, mysterious, and sacrosanct; the other is accessible and efficient. The only remedy which the last can devise against contempt of the stable basis of authority is religious mystery and impenetrable seclusion. This is the conception of monarchy, as something to be caught and held tightly and forcibly, like a palladium or mascotte, as if some magical virtue inhered in the most ignorant man in the realm.

Nicolas of Damascus gives a curious turn to Xenophon's odd story about the Mossyni; who shut up their king in a tower, and if he counsel ill for the State, slowly starve him to death (*βασιλέα τρέφουσιν ἐν πύργῳ κατάκλειστον, ἐὰν δέ τις δόξῃ κακῶς ποτε βεβουλεῦσθαι τῷ λιμῷ αὐτὸν ἀποκτείνουσι*). It is not merely the clever ruse of a dominant priestly caste to secure indirectly the control of affairs—such indeed is the whole outcome of Brahmin influence in India from the very dawn of history; the king becomes the mouthpiece and executive of the supreme caste, and if his power is in theory illimitable, it is

very effectively coerced by their tradition. But the seclusion is also due to a curious blending of the superstitions of *totem* and of *fetich*. The tribal representative inherits ancestral powers and must be guarded from harm, just like an idol in a shrine. It is a commonplace that large portions, if not the whole, of the East are ruled from the zenana, from behind the purdah; and here, as in China, effective power comes to flow naturally to a class or sex which seems to labour under severe but nominal disabilities. If religious awe, semi-divine descent, or priestly prerogative surround the monarch, the palace becomes both a temple and a prison for the unhappy repository of celestial power. The caliphate sank into this insignificant holiness and nominal suzerainty as soon as the Commanders of the Faithful abandoned the simple life of the meditative Arabian priest or spirited warrior, and entered the enticing paradise of Damascus or Bagdad. Two ancient monarchies became conspicuous instances of this curious seclusion, and have both issued from gloom to the daylight within living memory. Japan's *Mikado* represents the motionless centre of the revolving wheel, sacred in descent and altogether too holy for mundane cares. A sincere or interested hypocrisy in a powerful minister establishes side by side or in technical inferiority an effective office, the *Tycoon* or *Shogun;* which itself becoming hereditary like the French majorate under the Merovingians, is transmitted to a long line of secular royalties. There was some excuse for the early error as to the relation of the two—which regarded one as the spiritual emperor, the other as the temporal. In fact, the dormant plenitude of the Mikado's prerogative had never been curtailed or abrogated; and a long and at last influential series of reactionary politicians and writers had demanded the restoration of power to legitimate hands.

Lamaism (under Antoninus VIII.)

Thus the opposite result was reached to the judgment of Pope Zachary in the middle of the eighth

Lamaism (under Antoninus VIII.)

century. It was the Japanese Childeric III. who emerged from imprisonment to mount a real throne, and it was the modern counterpart of Pepin le Bref who retired with good grace from a usurped and perilous post. Again, from similar causes there grew up in the Potala of Lassa in Tibet (and perhaps too in the kingdom of Nepaul) a divorce of theoretical and effective sovereignty: the nominal ruler being an imprisoned infant whom the regent never allowed to reach maturity; with what measure of sincerity and odd mixture of hypocrisy and self-deception, it is impossible to ascertain. It would seem that the present Dalai-Lama has succeeded in passing safely the fatal term of adolescence and has overpowered his regent —the same fortunes attending the spiritual ruler (so-called) in both Eastern countries. It is no secret (to those who know the views of the special envoys to Western courts, sent by the palace of Pekin in 1906) that the weakness of the present regimen is largely ascribed to the immurement of the sovereign, to the inevitable ignorance of a ruler who, whether in Ravenna or the Forbidden City, or Tzarskoe Selo or Yildiz, is the worst informed man in his dominions. And if China be allowed, without interference or undue pressure from her Eastern or Western neighbours, to work out her own destiny, it cannot be doubted that a great change may be expected in the attitude of the sovereign to affairs; in the substitution of imperial progress through the provinces in place of the sedentary indolence of Pekin.

Incompatible with imperial tradition: 'de facto' and 'de jure' rule one and indivisible.

§ 5. We have wandered thus far afield from the unfortunate youth who was at the same time priest of the sun and Roman emperor; for such remote and incomplete parallels are of significance in estimating the tendencies of human thought, and in explaining an anomalous attitude of mingled criticism and loyalty which subjects assume towards a sovereign. The sacrilegious invasion of Roman temples and the palace of Augustus by an orgiastic cult and a black stone could only be a very transient episode. The proposal

of Soæmias was impracticable—the emperor must rule himself or cease to exist. Religion was not for the ancients a supreme or a rival department of life: it was, at least among the Romans, a subordinate province; and had a natural claim (without intrusion or encroachment on earthly affairs) upon the attention of the citizen, the magistrate, and the general. No exclusive caste prescribed a calendar and ritual to an ignorant and awe-struck mass; each man was at liberty to worship his own deity, even (within some limit) to follow the grotesque practices of his own special cult.

Incompatible with imperial tradition: 'de facto' and 'de jure' rule one and indivisible.

It was the exclusiveness of the God of Emesa and of Calvary that moved the anger or suspicion of the best of the Romans. M. de Champagny need be at no great pains to show that the Gospel alone could save the empire from the debasing Orientalism, which is his constant theme: this we may readily admit. What is more difficult is to apportion the blame to the statesmen of Rome for lacking all power to distinguish between the genuine panacea and the fraudulent imitation. The worship of Mithra penetrates widely over the empire and within the army; Aurelian is a priest of the sun—but it is a spiritualised worship akin to the rising Mazdeism of the new Persian restoration, and bears small likeness to the rites of Emesa. The claim of religious observance and belief to occupy a transcendent and autonomous sphere was not for a moment tolerated in Rome; everything must be subservient to the general welfare of the State. The mystic philosopher might find repose in meditation without incurring the suspicion of the State; but an orgiastic proselytising cult was regarded with the same distrust as is evidenced long before in the "SCtum de Bacanalibus."

The Roman official was at best a Pentheus; and his wise motto was "*Surtout point de zêle*," his sympathy with that sobriety, which with the eighteenth century put an equal ban on the railer at religion and on the "enthusiast." Eclecticism was

Incompatible with imperial tradition: 'de facto' and 'de jure' rule one and indivisible.

permitted if it was personal; Marcia, like Poppæa, was a patroness of the Christians; Mammæa may have attended the lessons of Origen; Philip may have shown some favour or some curiosity in the same direction; the well-known *lararium* of Alexander may have contained the busts of Jewish prophets and of the Christian Saviour. But the extravagant claim of the Black Stone ran counter to all the tastes and prejudices of the Romans. The reaction toward archaic simplicity and military frankness which marks the remainder of the century may well have found reinforcement in the disgust at this Asiatic worship—for a moment dominating the capital. Meantime, we would again refer to the impossible if sincere proposal of the feminine conclave. Elagabalus did not become the Dalai-Lama of a new cult. The Roman constitution still required the personal activity and responsible government of its chief; and after two more experiments with a blameless but inefficient minority, the State recurred once more to the elderly and much-tried general. Syria handed on the torch almost at once to Illyricum—the nursery of the strenuous line which saved the empire.

Untimely civilian regimen of Severus Alexander.

§ 6. Thus the undoubted reaction towards a plausible imitation of old Roman virtue did not go far enough. Still were women at the head of the administration; still, as the Goths complained of their young king, Athalaric, the chieftain was not allowed to become a man, kept always in leading-strings; and still the supreme civil authority was entrusted to an Oriental. It was felt that with all his willingness and amiability, Alexander was not representative of the Roman people; and after the first rejoicing at the evident purity of the new régime, a secret and not very articulate discontent arose, by no means confined to the soldiers, who threatened Ulpian so often, and in the end massacred mother and pious son together. We notice the chivalrous pride in the young Cæsar passing into indifference and contempt; the Augustan historian essays to give to his portrait the complete

ness of an ideal prince, a kind of second "Cyropædia." Had Alexander succeeded Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius, his weak dutifulness might not have disqualified him from a successful principate. But the legions and the barbarians inside and outside the empire had felt their power, and sterner material was needed. The insolent troops of Caracalla had not careered for nothing across the realm; and with conscious defiance of the Senate and Roman sentiment raised his presumed bastard to the seat of Augustus and Trajan. The mild and civilian tone of the whole reign of Alexander, his solemn and orderly Council, germ of the later "Consistory," his "piety" to his mother and deference to Ulpian's advice—all this came inopportunely or too late. So did the mild and innocent pastimes of Honorius with his feathered pets, or the calligraphy of Theodosius II., or the real artistic tastes and achievements of the seventh Constantine, by which (it is alleged) he eked out his scanty pittance under the hard rule of Lecapenus; so, in some modern sovereign faced with a crisis that demands the enterprise and daring of a hero, the domestic virtues and the fondness for the quiet hearth, the partner of his fears, the youthful heirs of his sorrow. It is often debated in academic circles whether a nation or a government can have a conscience; but Machiavelli is undeniably right in maintaining, with airy regret, that the virtues which make a good Christian are not those which make a good citizen or a good ruler. "*Majus aliquid et excelsius postulatur a principe*," argued Tiberius, not indeed in this connection, but in deprecating an offer of further centralised and still minuter autocracy which the Senate saw fit to make. The times demanded a ruler of heroic mould, and in spite of our admiration for the docile and amiable son of Mammæa, our protest against the callous treatment by Julian the emperor in his satiric retrospect of the "Cæsars," we must admit that Severus himself, Decius, Valerian, Gallienus, Claudius, and Aurelian deserved better of the republic. The

Untimely civilian regimen of Severus Alexander.

Untimely civilian regimen of Severus Alexander.

autocracy was in commission, and the people tired of this veiled disguise. The future lay with a tried and popular leader who could find work for the great mercenary legions and command their respect.

The reaction of the years 222–235 kept steadily in view the civilian character of the Roman monarchy which had predominated under the earlier Antonines. Alexander refused the designation, but he adopted the policy. We are not at fault in ascribing to this reign the first attempt to divorce the service of the civilian from the career of the soldier. With the dynasty of Severus, and especially with the first and last of the line, the legal duties of the prefect almost monopolise his time and attention. The provincial governors are reminded by practice and precept that their chief function is to "tell the law"; and the curious persistence of the uncritical Lampridius on Alexander's "severity" to the troops conceals, we doubt not, a perpetual feud between the two parties, in which the emperor and his advisers can hardly be congratulated on success. Another historian, who served a consulate of nervous apprehension outside Rome, could tell a different story. Alexander was firm enough to show favour to the Pannonian governor, the historian Dio Cassius; but he could not guarantee his safety in the capital, and he spent, like Bibulus, his term of office in profound seclusion.

After the deplorable murder of the empress-regent and the young prince (he was scarcely twenty-five) the two forces are once more seen in unappeasable combat; and while the reign of Maximinus I. the Thracian belongs to the next epoch of border warfare, of hard fighting, of civil turmoil, and the "simple life," the reigns of Maximus and Balbinus and the third Gordian represent the last expiring attempt to revive genuine Antoninian tradition. There is the concession to the present needs: a low-born and vigorous general for the itinerant and military duties;

and a delicately nurtured noble to be the fixed point, the stationary emperor in Rome, in constant association with the Senate, already as fearful of the absence as of the presence of the sovereign. For it is clear, the Senate, at least in part, realised by this time the nature of the crisis and the tendency of the current—the *curia* was becoming superfluous. In the election of the semi-consular colleagues as joint-emperors, they obeyed the imperative demand of the times for a division of labour. "*Militemus*" is the first watchword of Pertinax; "*laboremus*" the last of his imitator and avenger, Severus. It is the interference of the Senate in the strictly imperial department of national defence that rouses the ire of the founder of the African house, who had treated the nobles hitherto with marked clemency. There are signs that this specialising of function, this separation of province, might have been accepted, if straightforward.

Untimely civilian regimen of Severus Alexander.

§ 7. We cannot forget that the first Severus swept away the interdict of Augustus on a *senatorial* governor of Egypt; that the second raised, not without reason, the pretorian prefect to *senatorial* rank, because it was not fitting that the highest order should be amenable to any one of inferior degree. If our surmise is correct, that the whole tendency of the only two calculated governments of the time made for this distinction, we are also right in attributing the policy of Diocletian to the initiative of the African house. The emperors and the legal advisers desired to reach a *modus vivendi* between the Senate and the executive; to define with more or less precision the spheres in which their help was willingly accepted, in which their intervention was strongly resented. But with each reign or dynasty the whole dreary record of these relations follows the same lines—a guarded friendliness, a conspiracy, mutual distrust, wholesale terror and massacre. We read with a shudder the terrible and pathetic account in Dio of the summary execution of the "bald man," to whom some dream or presage seems to point as a pretender; and we are

Diocletian's reforms already in embryo: military and civil.

Diocletian's reforms already in embryo: military and civil.

both relieved and dismayed to find that Severus had nothing to do with this hasty sentence, and that the Senate had merely offered up the first available guiltless victim to distract imperial suspicion. Something in the very nature of the constitution hindered any real understanding. There was throughout the whole imperial history an astonishing absence of personal loyalty; there was no approach to that homely interest in the happenings of the palace and the first family; such as brightens the dulness of modern politics, and in some degree atones to the people for the disappointment of many of its earlier hopes. Such affection has without doubt tided over many crises which otherwise would have been pacified with blood; and the most valuable asset in a modern realm is this indirect influence, this intimate attachment of highest and lowest, which is so hard for the stranger to appreciate and so impossible if destroyed to replace.

The Senate had no such feeling for the monarch of the hour; and it was accustomed to look upon any change as an improvement. The provincial pretender, desirous like a feudal baron, of winning some recognition of legitimacy, was usually loud in praising the august body, professing the profoundest respect, deploring the lost or suppressed prerogative. If we can believe Capitolinus, Albinus took up this attitude in a speech of republican outspokenness; and it is evident by his later proscription that Severus regarded in the most serious light this secret understanding of liberal senators with his rival in Gaul. Macrinus wrote in a like humble and deprecating strain twenty years later—the victim of a hasty election he awaits the approval of the Senate, which he overtly recognises as the "fountain of honour" and unique source of authority. Under this dual or consular experiment of the year 238, the Senate seemed to supersede the Dictator and the Master of the Horse (amenable solely to his chief) by twin emperors, whose mutual rivalry might guarantee its own safety

and influence. Their presage was verified, but the outcome was the direct reverse of their hopes. Maximus and Balbinus quarrelled, and their disunion led to their ruin. For the soldiers detested both the senatorial nominees; and could not understand, especially after the reign of Antoninus V., the civil fictions decently concealing the force of arms. They attacked these respectable emperors severally and overcame them; and we reach the last scene in the promising youth of yet another imperial stripling; raised in his boyhood by military influence and destined to fall by the same.

Diocletian's reforms already in embryo: military and civil.

Here, as was only natural, we mark a still more conspicuous surrender of direct control. Power fell into the hands of an honest man; and Timesicles, or Timesitheus, the prefect, revives the best memories of Ulpian's ministry. But the time was not ripe for this mild and pacific rule, which recalls to us the modern reign of some heir to an ancestral throne. But while the reigns of Persian Sapor or of Spanish Alfonso, dating from their earliest breath, enlist the chivalrous sympathy of their subjects, the Roman Cæsar gained little from this pathetic isolation of imperial childhood. It would be a mistake to regard the violence of Maximin or the treachery of Philip as a mere sporadic outburst of personal ambition and camp-riot. Docile youth or helpless infancy was out of place on the throne of Augustus; and as Gordian grew to manhood without escaping tutelage, discontent arose. Nevertheless one wildly improbable legend sought to connect the later Flavian line with the Gordian family; for Victor in his Epitome suggests that Claudius II. was in truth the son of the third of the name. The brief interval makes it impossible, but the chronicler's hypothesis (*ut plerique putant*) is instructive both of the desire to attach a new dynasty to an earlier line, and of the halo which surrounded and immortalised a departed sovereign. Yet the days of powerful ministers are over; and the emperor resumes in the trouble that is coming his

Diocletian's reforms already in embryo: military and civil.

direct and personal sway. The long list of palace officials, of administrative lawyers, of prefectural vice-sovereigns is closed. And we must except an instance which at first sight looks like a close parallel; for the revival of the censorship under Decius has in truth nothing in common with the delegacy of plenary power to Perennis, to Plautian, or to Timesicles.

Reaction to military and personal rule.

§ 8. We have now ended our survey of this aspect of an amazing period; of the undying permanence of the old Roman prejudice against theoretical sovereignty divorced from effective control. We have now to summarise rapidly some further features of the times which herald the dislocation and disorders of the future. To this period belong the premonitory symptoms: the robber-bands of Bullas, of Maternus (under Commodus), of the nameless marauder of Palestine who cheats Severus into recognition, of Numerianus who forges imperial credentials for raising a "company" in Gaul against Albinus, and receives the thanks and the pardon of Severus for this unauthorised aid—lastly, of the "Dæmon" who overran Thrace in the guise of Alexander of Macedon with a sort of Bacchantic cortège of four hundred men, and vanished mysteriously at Chalcedon. I am disposed to attach weight in these circumstances to a chance passage in Tertullian's Apologetic, which seems to imply the establishment of regular garrison by Severus in the towns of the empire, to overawe the brigands who profited by the insecurity or brief tenure of the throne. And besides, the provinces and municipal boroughs appear to be losing their desire and power of self-government. We note the tenderness of the Septimian jurists for local custom which is to be respected; and we mark with interest an early instance of the suspicion which the State is coming to entertain of its agents. Two ominous features of the decay of local feeling meet our gaze; the *decurio*, still a coveted position under Trajan, has to be brought back by force to his narrow routine and costly duties; and a significant statement is found in the Digest

Reaction to military and personal rule.

that "no public activity falls outside the competence of the governor." Centralisation is inevitable, whether we are to blame the sloth of the subject or the encroachment of the ruler. Again, there are traces in the rescripts of Severus of the burdens which were imposed by the people upon the so-called privileged class, of the need to enforce the due fulfilment of a hasty promise of some public work, of the extraordinary care which was taken to prevent the increase of taxation—a misery which is the common feature of all states which are over-administered, whether the people are nominally free or in theory slaves of an absolute master. Here, in solution, are all the elements of later disintegration—the insecurity and discontent which will render necessary a more effective control, a more costly system of civil service, the disappearance of the old Roman virtues, the superseding of autonomy by uniform legislation, the humanitarian bias of the law side by side with caste-prejudice and military exclusiveness, a decrease in the respect entertained for the abstract sovereignty of the State; and, with all the impartial regularity of equitable treatment, a significant emergence of subjective caprice both in ruler and in malcontent citizen. It will be seen in the next age that moral ideas are by no means extinct—with all its faults the third century holds tightly to certain antique and honourable prejudices; and the rapid and sanguinary succession of pretenders is something more than a mere selfish scuffle for place and power. But separatism prevails, and violent contrasts and impassable barriers; of which this epoch witnesses the foundation. The emperor is once more suspicious, not merely of his peers but of his subjects and of his vicegerents; he has had ample reason for this distrust, and to assure himself of efficiency we have the establishment of a recognised service, a bureaucracy, which Adrian had already started, which Alexander reduced to some system; with certain harmless pedantry desired to clothe in a hierarchic

Reaction to military and personal rule.

uniform. The military class and the military career confront the civilian as a thing apart; the superior order in each city is marked off from the rest by onerous privilege and (like the rhetorician, unless specially favoured) is kept sedulously in the rank of payers. The subsequent crisis will be seen to give a stir to a society already crystallising into caste and stratum; but the features of the semi-Byzantinism of the fourth century are to be found in the social and official distinction of the age of the Severi; just as we can detect there also in germ and embryo the characteristic marks of Diocletian's restoration.

ADDENDA

THE IMPRISONED MONARCH

The later writers, DIOD. SICUL., APOLLON. RHOD., NIC. DAMASC., POMPON. MELA, extend and perhaps exaggerate the account of XENOPHON. His words refer both to a custom and to a fact (*Anab.* v. 4, 26): ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς αὐτῶν ὁ ἐν τῷ μόσσυνι τῷ ἐπ' ἄκρου ᾠκοδομημένῳ (ὃν τρέφουσι πάντες κοινῇ αὐτοῦ μένοντα κ. φυλάττουσιν) οὐκ ἤθελεν ἐξελθεῖν; and so was burnt, like Valens, in his Tower. APOLLON. in true epic grandiloquence (ii. 1026):—

> Αὐτὰρ ἐν ὑψίστῳ βασιλεὺς μόσσυνι θαάσσων
> Ἰθείας πολέεσσι δικὰς λαοῖσι δικάζει
> Σχέτλιος· ἦν γάρ πού τι θεμιστεύων ἀλίτηται,
> Λιμῷ μιν κεῖν' ἦμαρ ἐνικλείσαντες ἔχουσιν.

[It seems clear from the *scholiast* here that EPHORUS and NYMPHODORUS originated the legend of death by starvation: ἄδικόν τι κρίναντα ἐγκλείουσι κ. λιμαγχονοῦσι. If NYMPH. wrote under Ptol. Philad., APOLL. is no doubt indebted to him.]

MELA i. 19: *Mossyni . . . reges suffragio deligunt vinculisque et arctissimâ custodiâ tenent atq. ubi culpam prave quid imperando meruere, inedia diei totius afficiunt.* DIODORUS expands the early account as follows (xiv. 30): The Greeks κατὰ κράτος εἷλον· ἦν δὲ τὸ χωρίον τοῦτο μητρόπολις τῶν ἄλλων ἐρυμάτων ἐν ᾧ κ. ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτῶν κατῴκει τὸν ὑψηλότατον τόπον ἔχων. Ἔθος δ' ἔχει πάτριον μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν πάντα βίον, κἀκεῖθεν διαδοῦναι τοῖς ὄχλοις τὰ προστάγματα. (Strabo dwells only on the shameless and savage life of this barbarous tribe.) I cannot help thinking that the story is due to a misinterpretation of XEN. and EPHORUS; for φυλάττουσι may merely imply "guard." Yet the penalty for misgovernment is circumstantial, and the one day's compulsory fast becomes in NICOLAS a formal execution by famine. I have an uneasy misgiving that the whole question is minutely examined in some exhaustive German monograph, written perhaps since the modern confinement of the "Prisoner of the Vatican." I am not satisfied that Wesseling and Hemsterhusius were the last to treat this fascinating theory.

CHAPTER III

THE MORAL REVIVAL, THE SUGGESTED DYARCHY, AND THE ILLYRIAN LINE (235–285 A.D.)

D. Gordian House (from Africa):

Jul. Valer. Maximinus I. (Dacia)	235–238	milit. nomin.
Maximus I. (? or -inus), son	236–238	birth.
M. Antonius Gordianus I. (at Carthage)	238	provinc. nomin.
M. Ant. Gordianus II. (son)	238	birth.
Maximus II. Pupienus	238	senat. nomin.
Dec. Jun. Balbinus	238	senat. nomin.
M. Antonius Gordianus III. (son of II.)	238–244	milit. nom. and birth.

E. Period of Disorder:

M. Julius Philippus I. and II. (Arab)	244–249	milit. nomin.
C. Messius Decius (Pannon.)	249–251	milit. nom.
Herennius Etruscus (son)		birth.
Hostilianus (brother)	251–252	birth.
C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus	251–253	milit. nom.
Volusianus Gallus II. (son)		birth.
Æmilianus	253	milit. nom.
P. Licinius Valerianus I.	253–260	milit. nom.
P. Licin. Gallienus (son)	253–268	birth.
Licinius Valerianus II. (brother)		
Saloninus (nephew), &c., or Valerianus III.		

F. The "Thirty Tyrants":—

(*a*) The Gaulish monarchy:

Postumus	258–267	milit. nom.
Kills Saloninus at Cologne. Reigns at Trèves over Gaul, Britain, Spain; associates—		
Victorinus: a reneg. general of Gallien, slain by own troops	265–268	co-opt.
Lælianus: elev. and slain by own troops	267	milit. nom.
Marius: elev. and slain by own troops	267 Oct.–268 Feb.	
Victoria (mother of Victorin)	268–270?	
Tetricus: gov. of Aquitaine; yields to Aurelian, 274	268–274	Female nom.

(*b*) The Eastern Monarchy:

(1) Roman: in Egypt and Syria—

BALISTA (?) and CYRIADES 261

FULV. MACRIANUS . { vanq. by Aureolus. } . . 261–262

MACRIANUS II. (son)

QUIETUS (son)

(2) Alien—

SEPTIMIUS ODÆNATHUS, recogn. by Gallien . "imp." 262 "Aug." 264–267 . co-opt.

HERODES (son), both slain by Mæonius . . . . . } 265–266 . birth.

{ ZENOBIA (wife of Od) 266–273
{ VABALATHUS (son) . . . "Aug" 270 or 1–272 birth.

(*c*) Brief and sporadic seditions:

Pannonia.

INGENUUS . . { vanq. by Aureolus. } . . 258

REGALIANUS, ? Dacian (killed by own soldiers).

Isauria.

TREBELLIANUS (bandit. predec. of Zeno and Longinus).

Egypt.

ÆMILIANUS II. { vanq. by Theodotus, sent by Gallien. } . 263

FIRMUS I. (a "bandit") . . . 274

North Italy.

AUREOLUS, Dacian herdsman (long faithful lieut. of Gallien) } 267–270

G. The "Illyrian" or Pannonian line:

M. AUREL. CLAUDIUS II. . . . . 268–270 . milit. nom.
QUINTILLUS (brother) . . . . . 270 . . . birth.
L. DOMIT. VALER. AURELIANUS . 270–275 . milit. nom.
M. CLAUDIUS TACITUS . . . . . 275–276 . senat. nomin.
FLORIANUS (brother) . . . . 276 . . . birth.
M. AURELIUS VALER. PROBUS . . 276–282 . milit. nom.
M. AURELIUS CARUS . . . . . 282–283 . milit. nom.
{ M. AURELIUS NUMERIANUS (son) . 283 . . . birth.
{ M. AURELIUS CARINUS (brother) JULIANUS II.) . . . . . } 283–285 . birth.

Revival of moral sternness and simple life.

§ 1. THERE is probably no period in ancient history which is regarded with more disfavour and less sympathy than the latter half of the third century: and I must plead guilty to sharing this hasty and unfair verdict, when for convenience I designate by the name of the "Great Anarchy" the time which elapses between Maximinus and Diocletian. The

ordinary reader is convinced that beyond the brilliant and unavailing achievements of Aurelian and Probus (270–282) there is nothing but shame and dishonour: the names of Zenobia and Longinus shine out with a faint but familiar light; beyond that all is darkness on the stage. We picture to ourselves a period of mere feudal tumult; provinces breaking loose from the imperial federation and setting up rulers on their own account; separatist or nationalist tendencies rife; the military leaders with ambitious selfishness seizing in mere caprice the perilous purple, and carving patrimonies and princedoms out of the fragments of the once solid fabric. We seem to see a cowed or empty Senate, gradually fading into complete insignificance; already so far losing its grasp on the administration and on the obsolete traditions of curial rule, that Diocletian's change comes merely to endorse an accomplished fact, not to effect a momentous revolution. The whole world seems a chaos of captains or "condottieri," military adventurers with their train-bands, crossing and recrossing in idle but costly mimicry of war, and spending on useless civil tumult the forces, which might have guarded the frontier and set back the barbarian inroads for some hundreds of years. Rarely, perhaps, was a judgment passed more superficial and undeserved. On closer acquaintance these years of seeming confusion unfold gradually to us several striking features and a consistent policy. In spite of the turbulence and chaos of election and massacre of short-lived emperors, it may be doubted if any age in the Roman annals shows greater public spirit, more disinterested public service and untiring endeavour, on the part of the chief actors. The Senate appears in a novel and serious light: it enters into a real partnership with the heroic defenders of the frontier. It seems clear that in Senate and Army alike the sense of danger and responsibility awoke some spirit akin to the moral earnestness of ancient Rome. We shall again see such a rising from sloth and ease in the seventh

Revival of moral sternness and simple life.

Revival of moral sternness and simple life.

century, when Heraclius and the religious or crusading fervour smite with amazing courage the enemy of Rome—the wrong enemy as many will consider; but a certain prevision of Islam was not among the mental endowments of the patriotic emperor. The moral revival and the new bluntness and simplicity date from Maximinus. Scarcely a breath of scandal stains the memory of his successors; even on Gallienus a more favourable verdict must be passed than is usually allowed; and the annals of continence and unremitting toil in barrack and field are broken only by vague rumours of Bonosus' gluttony, by an astounding but incredible scandal of Proculus, and by the old Cæsarian luxury and evil life of Carinus, the last of this series. The spirit of reformation is working in Philippus (244–249), who abolished one form of ancient vice in the idle and voluptuous capital; and in Tacitus (275–276), who with a puritan rigour wholly in keeping with the general tone of society, tries to root out the houses of ill fame. We know from other sources that after the grotesque license of that spoilt schoolboy Elagabalus, a remarkable reaction set in. It was not without significance that the persecutor Maximin and the supposed convert Philip stand at the head of this very needful purification of high places. For the Germanic virtue took up the rôle of Roman censor; and the wily Arabian, whether a convert to Christian religion or not, certainly shows distinct traces of Christian influence. Thus two streams unite—the stern and patriotic Roman, careless of self; the Christian, self-regarding and moral, in the restricted or technical sense. Nor indeed is it without a suggestive reminder that we find again in this period the heroic devotion of the Decii! However precarious the link in these later families to the earlier houses of the republic, it is not denied that Decius, father and son, perished nobly for the State, just as their fabled ancestors had done. Everything seemed to betoken (after the strange and un-Roman mildness or corruption of the

Afro-Syrian house) an awakened respect for tradition, for the past glories of a simpler city, when all united their efforts and sank their differences in the service of the State. Not without set purpose did Philip celebrate with great solemnity the thousandth year of imperial Rome; or Decius revive once more, as a colleague's dignity rather than as an adjunct or title of sovereignty, the old office of Censor. Indeed, after Severus II. this very sovereignty receives a new interpretation. We are apt to speak of the offer of Æmilianus (253) as if it represented merely the personal proposal of a despondent general, seeking to support with the majesty of Rome and the sanction of legitimacy a usurped and already threatened title. But this deference to the Senate is characteristic of the whole period. There was abroad a genuine desire to make the dyarchy a success, a working solution of the new problems of government. That the old jealousies of Army and Senate were lulled would be too much to assert: but the elevation of Tacitus and the "noble feud," when Senate and Army vied in surrendering their rights to the other, was by no means abnormal. Decimated by Severus I., called into a full partnership by his grand-nephew the second of the name, the Senate seemed in the elevation of Pupienus and Balbinus (238) to have recovered not merely its antique independence, but even the archaic form of government. Then for the first time was set in contrast the *military* duty, "stopping the dykes" against the barbarian flood, and the pacific *civil* functions of internal rule. The Senate once more rose to its full privileges. It sent despatches to the provinces; exchanged letters with the provincial governors, or with the municipal councils in those distant cities, which still preserved a measure of actual or nominal autonomy. The dream was rudely shattered, it is true, by the violence of the pretorians. The Senate held firmly to the principle of the "elevation of the fittest," to the theory which reserved the highest magistracy for

Revival of moral sternness and simple life.

Revival of moral sternness and simple life.

the elderly grey-beard, who had previously passed through all grades of a civil and a military hierarchy, already drifting apart but as yet parallel. But the army, imbued with a soldiers' love of children, secretly influenced by odd loyalty to deceased commanders, chivalrously devoted to the beauty and innocence of striplings, insisted first on the partnership of young Gordian and at last, on his sole and unfettered rule. But when this "lama"-minority passed once more under palace or petticoat government, as it had in the case of Alexander, once more power was devolved on the most capable of reigning: Philip the "shogun," displaces Gordian the "mikado."

Influence of the Senate once more genuine.

§ 2. In spite of the apparently unchecked control of the soldiers, the imperial government approached within a respectful distance of the ideal of Augustus. The documents and letters of the time, collected by the best of the quintet of historians, Vopiscus the Syracusan, show us infallible tokens of this great moral and republican reaction. The "patrimonial" and hereditary conception is no longer recognised; and although sons are in practice welcomed as associates, the right or claim to succeed is again and again in theory disallowed; and protests are formally raised against the arrogance of purple-born novices which represent public opinion, unmistakably sincere. Carus, one of the best of these efficient, laborious, and elderly rulers, never forgave himself for installing Carinus, Cæsar of the West, with the full prerogative of an Augustus; and it was with this prince, as we see, that the edifice crumbled away. The prominence of the senatorial debates, judgments, and decisions is a remarkable feature of this time. It is not a courtly pretence, as might well have been the deference of Hadrian or Aurelius to an obsequious assembly. The Fathers had in truth recovered something of that old fearlessness, when they awaited immovable in their places the onrush of the Gauls. Besides, as we may observe in later and feudal

history, the greater the apparent violence and disorder, the greater the passion for legitimacy. The momentary captains raised by the irrevocable words of their soldiers to a dangerous height, sought at once to secure recognition from a body, which beyond its immemorial prestige and dignity had defied Maximin, restored, as it were, the consulate, divided Italy amongst its twenty deputies, and refused to be daunted by the first failure of their African candidates. Just for a moment we are strangely familiar with the cries, the aspirations, the emotions that swayed the Roman Senate. We read of the new pride and courage with which they regarded the restoration of ancient right, not merely to choose a prince, but even to control and advise him. It is easy to say that these republican "velleities" were the veriest mockery, a mere piece of vanity and self-deception. But it would appear that the Senate was taken at its own valuation. No one disputed these claims, expressed with unusual clearness. The acceptance or recognition of a military Cæsar was not made with the alarmed haste that heaped titles on any and every soldiers' nominee in the earlier part of the century—Macrinus, Diadumenianus, Elagabalus. The military leaders, as a rule, paid a genuine deference to the Senate. The crowding business of the empire was largely transacted in the temple, where the Senate met; perhaps the only criticism we encounter at the time is a letter from Aurelian, who wonders at the hesitation shown in consulting the Sibylline Books: "Did the conscript fathers forget that these deliberations took place in no Christian conventicle, but in the temple of the Gods?" Winning universal respect, recovering many of its ancient functions, delegating to a distant general the duty of defence, the Senate seemed well on the way to establish that principle of division of labour which Diocletian afterwards effected on very different lines. Minute as was the personal supervision of the emperor, as we see from Valerian's letters, yet

Influence of the Senate once more genuine.

Influence of the Senate once more genuine.

large and ample were the surrenders made to the Senate in civil affairs; and this without jealousy or suspicion.

It is true we must distrust the curious and reiterated statement of Gallien's cruelty to the soldiers; but we may well conceive that one possible explanation of that strange character may lie in a vague desire to re-establish a peaceful and *civil* régime in the interior of the realm, and a vague complacence in making over to other stout champions the more distant and precarious posts of command—which, as it appeared, did not menace the supplies of Rome or the dignity of the emperor reigning in the capital. That Utopian or golden age when soldiers, as Probus, himself a successful general, said, "should be no longer needful," floated as a vision before the eyes of many. Even the well-known prohibition of this same Emperor Gallienus, directed against a momentary resumption of arms by the Senate in a crisis, may be due to no suspicion of their loyalty, but to this new conviction that the two spheres were best apart; and that, even if it was not yet attained, a severance of office and department was the goal for which constructive statesmen should strive. We may here point out that when this divorce was actually accomplished in the next century, when Manchu "banners" and garrisons were set over against accomplished but unwarlike "literati,"—the two contrasted powers were held in leash by a frank and unabashed despotism. Philo had seen that the divine attributes, the kingly (or punitive) and the creative (or benignant), fell under the supreme if anonymous "monarchy." Just in the same way, without derogation to the centralised authority, the two ranks in the hierarchy issued down to the meanest secretary or recruit, from the single fount. But in the system, evolved almost without conscious intent, during the previous half-century, a more republican cast had been given to the whole administration. Perhaps we may read in the lacunæ of the

imperfect annals of Aurelian's reign, the abandonment of this project of peaceful partition. He at least, in contrast to the simple manners, the free address, the popular methods of these Cæsars of the "barrack-room," affected a monarchic splendour and pomp of dress and retinue which presaged the coming orientalism under Diocletian. The suspicions of the Senate's loyalty once awakened in the breast of some able and popular general, the scheme was henceforward impracticable. Mutual confidence was essential, and this was alien to the traditional feud of Army and Senate,—which in imperial Rome, as in France of the Revolution or our own day, seems a natural outcome and an inseparable accompaniment of a republic mainly administered on civilian lines.

Influence of the Senate once more genuine.

§ 3. Another feature of this time is the mutual friendship and sincere personal attachment of the various princes, the solidarity, if I may so say, of the training, the discipline, the traditions of the staff-corps, which provided a line of able rulers from the single province of Pannonia or Illyricum. Accustomed as the reader is to dismiss these fifty years as a period of bloodthirsty cruelty and internecine warfare, he must acquire patience for a closer analysis of the successive vacancies in sovereign power. He will be astonished to discover how seldom can the hateful charge of cruel treachery be justly levelled at the successful candidate. The competitors all arose from the great military caste, which the needs of the empire had raised up and consolidated, since the failure of the civilian régime under Alexander (235). A regular school is confidently alluded to as supplying a series of emperors—all whether as generals or lieutenants, familiarly known to one another, all trusted by their superiors, and marked by straightforwardness and devotion to duty. No period is so singularly and happily free from personal rancour, from court-intrigue, or from secret assassination. Vopiscus dismisses as the idlest gossip, as unworthy of the character of both princes, the

Solidarity of the Illyrian staff-corps: sense of public duty.

Solidarity of the Illyrian staff-corps: sense of public duty.

suspicion which some attached to Carus, successor of the murdered Probus. For the frequent vacancies the soldiers are to blame, and the outbreak of sudden disaffection in an idle camp and the fortune of civil war—a civil war which Gallienus refused in many cases to acknowledge by a bold and generous fiction. It is not until we come to the humanitarian prejudices of later Byzantium that we find instances of such clemency: Aurelian spares and honours Tetricus and Zenobia, Probus had no hand in the massacre of Florianus, is unwilling that Saturninus should perish, and pensions with remarkable kindness the widow and sons of Bonosus. It is clear that in the altered conditions of the monarchy and the conception of office, there is not the same jealous and exclusive claim to sovereign position which will not tolerate a rival.

Severus II. thanked Ovinius Camillus with pleasant irony for his kindness in undertaking a share of imperial responsibility: and there are several cases in this latter half of the same century in which foreign Augusti are recognised by the sovereign at Rome. In fact, for one and twenty years, nearly a generation, the *imperium* had been divided; from the association of Gallienus by his father as sovereign of the West to the willing retirement of Tetricus from the insecure throne in Bordeaux. Claudius II. postpones the conquest of personal rivals in face of the more pressing danger of the public foes. Gallienus had already shown a remarkable forbearance towards usurpers, which may at first sight seem difficult to reconcile with his character—a firm repression of military sedition, and a resolute reservation of the military forces of the State for the imperial disposal. In a word, in spite of the frequent duels of pretenders to the empire, "one and indivisible," there is some notable postponement of private interest to general welfare. And this would have been inconceivable had not these princes dimly recognised that the distant rival, though disputing their exclusive claim, was doing

good service. Documents and letters of the period prove to us it was no unnatural welter of selfish egoism: there are glimpses of a consistent policy, of increased humanity, of a novel attitude to barbarians, to prisoners, and to mutineers, as well as to pretenders to the purple. This solidarity of the Pannonian or Illyrian staff-corps may be regarded as a remarkable and significant feature of the time. Decius (who like Titus and Tiberius II. won in a few years a renown disproportionate perhaps to his performance) is the pioneer in the work of imperial restoration. All the host of transient but meritorious commanders, whom the force of circumstance and the soldiers' will invested with sovereignty, might trace to this prince their fortunes, their elevation, and their doom.

Solidarity of the Illyrian staff-corps: sense of public duty.

§ 4. For this sturdy and single-minded staff-corps were at the mercy of their soldiers. The real enemies of the emperors, of the pretenders (who guarded or administered in this decentralised separatism), were not their rivals but their own regiments. To examine and analyse the fate of these usurpers or legitimate rulers, is not to open a page of despotic cruelty or treacherous intrigue, but to accumulate evidence of the dangers of a headless army, without discipline or proper control; of that system of independent *local* militias, which by several historians has been offered to the Roman Empire as a panacea for all its troubles. One is not in the habit of citing Montesquieu for sound maxims or judgments upon a government he could neither understand nor appreciate. But he is right in representing this period as a kind of "irregular military republic"; like the regency of Algiers, where the dey was the short-lived and embarrassed puppet of a military conclave; and historical studies will suggest the general analogy of the Mamelukes and the Janissaries. It is the fashion to complain of the absence of representative institutions and of "national guards," when the critic of the study reviews or rebukes the system which Augustus

The provincial regiments; responsible for merciless treatment of unsuccess.

The provincial regiments; responsible for merciless treatment of unsuccess.

bequeathed to the civilised world. "Si l'empire avait su donner aux assemblées provinciales une sérieuse existence, si les milices communales que nous avons trouvées au premier siècle avaient subsisté au troisième, l'Espagne aurait eu aisément raison de cette poignée de maraudeurs. . . . L'isolement des cités les empêcha d'organiser la défense commune." But one must remind such fault-finders that the empire was deliberately settled upon a peace footing. The violation of the frontier, the plundering of Thrace or Bithynia, the exposure of the northern limit of Italy, was not within the horizon of the political prophet in the Augustan age. The end of civil strife seemed to be the chief aim of the new monarchy; and it must be frankly admitted that to attain this laudable ambition much that to us seems salutary and even indispensable was sacrificed. The early empire has many restraints upon a full right of association, but very few on that of public congress. There was great freedom of meeting; and as we shall often have occasion to remark, it was the imperial policy which encouraged the beneficiaries in the province; who despised or let slip those half-religious, half-political assemblies which allowed and even fostered the expression of public opinion. But a national or local militia did not come within this wide horizon of imperial liberalism. It was the peculiar pride of the system that it appealed to moral principles, not to force.

The interior provinces almost never listened to the tramp of soldiers, rarely beheld the martial pomp of a parade. Respect for the majesty and pacific mission of Rome kept quiet petty envies and neighbourly jealousies in the old city-states. The seeds of decay were sown in the classical peoples and their institutions in the very period of their brilliance; the empire, so far from suppressing, only entered in to undertake the wardship of minors already ageing by a precocious abuse of their powers. And it was a civil and legal tutelage, not a military surveillance.

The provincial regiments; responsible for merciless treatment of unsuccess.

The barbarian pressure, the unrest of the third century, was not contemplated in the system of Augustus. The maintenance of military garrisons, permanent, and in some degree independent, would have seemed a dangerous expedient; the general peace would be imperilled to guard against an unlikely possibility. We cannot doubt that the standing force was largely increased after the wars of Marcus Aurelius, especially in the needed reforms of Severus I. It was realised, not without sadness, that the civilian rôle of the early empire must be considerably modified; and the third century represents a kind of duel between the two functions—of administration and defence. The so-called anarchy preceding Diocletian is only a serious warning and protest addressed to the party of "peace at any price."

State-service of pretenders: not personal ambition or local discontent.

§ 5. We have hazarded the conjecture that the suggestion of Æmilianus did not merely represent a widespread feeling, but was in some sense feasible. Efficacy might be secured in either department by a careful separation of duty and function. Such it must be confessed was not the view entertained by the two most masterful personalities of the closing century, Aurelian and Diocletian. With the re-establishment of security on the frontiers, the outward pomp of sovereignty and military autocracy, so far from being surrendered, was of set purpose increased; and the apparent revival of the Senate's prestige, so far from leading to any permanent recognition, was the last flicker of expiring privilege. But whatever were the secret tendencies of the time or the avowed projects of statesmen, the clear lesson of the age was the danger of almost independent military commands. It was not the private ambition of the general, but the imperfect control of the troops that roused the "pronunciamentos" of the third century—a curious mingling of patriotic and regimental sentiment.

The necessary increase of forces under arms, the

State-service of pretenders: not personal ambition or local discontent.

preoccupation of the central authority with other problems or its own peculiar vicissitudes, the urgency of the crisis in the various detached and isolated points of barbarian attack, the high spirit of the armies and their ignorance of this Roman tradition (which seeks to efface the part in favour of the whole), the undoubted prowess and capacity of the new school of generals—all this combined to make the creation of a new Augustus the common and acknowledged remedy. In the absence of any definite central control in military affairs, it was felt that the general called upon to repress a genuine danger should possess plenary authority. So far from these mutinies representing local discontent and pretensions to independence, it is quite evident that they sought to maintain the majesty of Rome. Roused by a sense of danger, an unreflected instinct of self-preservation, these movements were continued in a highly patriotic spirit. The whole imperial line in Gaul, ending with clemency and credit to both parties concerned in Pisuvius Tetricus, is a signal instance of this. Elsewhere, the tenure of a power (necessarily, as it seemed, supreme) was still more brief and precarious. Without wanton caprice, without the studied cruelty, for example, of the Turkish troops in Bagdad, these regiments inherited the ruthlessness of military life, and pitilessly sacrificed the incompetent or the tottering competitor. It will be noted how large a proportion of these phantom Cæsars succumbed to the swords of their own supporters. If their own nominee could not win the endorsement of success, he must be surrendered. Thus the soldiers themselves, heartless and arbitrary as their conduct appears, were preparing the way by this holocaust for the advent of the single ruler. The siege and sack of Autun, finding numberless parallels in the civil wars of later and less humane days, stands out as a single instance of the "Cossack spirit," if I may use the term; which makes the unarmed and civilian provincials the mere sport of

foreign troops of occupation. From such horrors the later history of Rome is mercifully free. It was the whole aim of the earlier line, down to the first reconstruction of Severus I. (193–211), to keep this indispensable yet perilous element in its proper place, and confine its influence to its fitting and subordinate duties.

State-service of pretenders: not personal ambition or local discontent.

One chief title to our esteem in the Emperor Augustus is his steadfast opposition to military demands. But in the distress of this third century the armies feel their power, and are conscious of being confronted by an antique element which fears and distrusts their influence. Probus (276–282) may or may not have given public utterance to his confident hope that "soon men-at-arms will be no longer needed." But in view of the predominance at that time of the military interest, it may have not a little contributed to his murder. The soldiers worshipped success, were brave only in actual danger, and resented the continuous and largely artificial duties in time of peace, which, as Tacitus reminds us, have been excogitated as a remedy against the leisure of camps. We have no desire to screen the renown of Roman armies from the indelible stain of the massacres of Aurelian, of Probus, and of many others; but the repentance of the army in the former case was at least sincere, and it is possible that the annalist, like the tired copyist of some manuscript, has been too ready to assimilate the doom of princes to one common model, and to assume that no accidental or natural death was possible for a wearer of the Roman purple.

Great problem of the time—the barbarians.

§ 6. One more topic of abiding interest to the student must now be noted, the imperial attitude to the new races—a subject to which ever and again the historian must hark back, even at the risk of repetition. Permanent and crystallised as the tradition of statesmanship became, effective as was the control of the *instituta majorum*, the *rigor publicus*, over the mere Asiatic caprice of an irresponsible

Great problem of the time—the barbarians.

ruler, there was at least in this respect no settled policy, no systematic idea of warfare, alliance, or incorporation. And this can scarcely be laid to the charge of imperial vacillation. It was impossible to employ a uniform method to tribes so various, to crises so widely differing, to inquiries for entrance and admission ranging from abject humility to insolent defiance. Tacitus, who is perhaps neither an unprejudiced critic of character nor a farseeing statesman, is at least a true prophet in his apprehension of the North. His strange sympathy with Chauvinism, with any and every knight-errant escapade on the Rhenish frontier, with the most ill-considered and costly campaigns of some immature imperial cadet, is due in part to his well-founded suspicions of that northerly rampart or river, debatable tithe-land or chain of forts. If in Mr. Ker's happy simile the Norseman throughout his life "hears the boom of the surges of chaos against the dykes of the world," it may truly be said that the Romans of a later day listened in like fashion for the tramp of the Teutonic hordes. This justified apprehension may relieve our historian of this obvious charge, that in the conception of politics he never passed beyond the mere selfish acquisitiveness of the republic, or the privilege and exclusiveness of the dominant clan or caste in an obsolete city-state. But it is this fear which explains his strange yet obviously sincere indictment of Tiberius: "*Princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus.*" It was an odd and indeed unholy alliance of the perpetual militarism of the convinced imperialist with the narrowness of the old city aristocrat. He could understand an *Imperator* for some venturesome foreign expedition—no doubt Trajan was his ideal; but he could not appreciate the firm hand and liberal policy in the interior combined with a flaccid interest in distant campaigns. His political principles were framed in the reaction of the fifteen years of Domitian's reign and by his own experience in that thunder-laden

suspense of the Senate. He did not realise that to administer is more difficult than to conquer, to retain than to acquire. The third Flavian employed excellent agents, and governed well and minutely; but he had little sympathy with wars of aggrandisement, and could afford to turn the barbaric danger into something of a laughing-stock. Yet it is very doubtful if this apparent supineness and indifference were altogether to blame, either in this case or with the much-abused Gallienus, some century and a half later.

Great problem of the time—the barbarians.

Nevertheless, however unfair may be Tacitus' estimate of some great rulers who on the whole deserved well of the State, his pious thankfulness for the internal feud that divided the Teutonic race was a piece of real political foresight. The incorporation of the barbarian in the commonwealth he could not conceive; enfranchisement to his Whig views had already gone too far. He looks on approvingly, with a kind of gloating delight at a gladiators' show, when two German tribes exterminate each other; and recognises in this "lovely spectacle" the hand of a special providence, whose intervention he is not wont to trace in human affairs. The real crisis, clearing up the situation and setting the future attitude of both parties, occurred under Aurelius. The palmy days of the pacific empire were over with the death of the first Antonine. For not quite fifty years (117–165) the imperial ideal was realised, and it is to this period that Gibbon alludes in attaching his remarkable eulogy. The wave was beaten back; and Commodus Antoninus IV. begins the policy of pensioning the barbarians, of assuring his own position or comfort by disgrace, which we may subsequently note in such different princes as Gallus I. (251), Jovianus (363), and Justinian.

With the details of the "later" defensive warfare we are happily unconcerned. The annals of this period are distressingly full of marches and countermarches, both in barbarian and Persian wars; which

Great problem of the time—the barbarians.

do not, however perfectly mastered and analysed, lead us one step further in advance towards a better understanding of the genuine relations. It is this patient and minute survey which in this volume we willingly surrender to another more competent to be the chronicler of war and its alarms. Through all these centuries the Rhenish, Danubian, and Euphratic frontier is maintained, with but slight modification. Rapine and raid may pillage Thrace and Macedonia, or capture and lay Antioch in ruins, but no serious measures of final conquest were ever contemplated either by Goth or Sassanid. As late as Harun al Rashid we must complain of the desultory and inconclusive character of the Oriental campaigns; of the utter want of purpose in the slave-dealing ravages, which without settled or constructive policy had the sole aim of inflicting harm and destroying city and village. Indeed in the whole epoch from Augustus to Theodosius, a period of four hundred years, the sole moments of deliberate recession are to be discovered under Hadrian (117) and Aurelian (273). Two of the most imperious and successful statesmen in the imperial line surrendered of their own free will a portion of Roman soil. I am well aware of the pathetic emphasis which historians lay on the evacuation by Jovian of the Mesopotamian provinces.

But it is difficult to maintain a serious or continued interest in the see-saw of the Eastern frontier; and we cannot forget that perhaps the greatest extent of Oriental territory was acquired in the reign of the weakest of sovereigns (Maurice), scarcely twenty years anterior to the total collapse of the great fabric. The two "moments" of genuine concern in Eastern relations occur indeed under Heraclius I. and Romanus IV. At an interval of four hundred years, Egypt and Syria are finally cut away from the parent stem, and an integral part of Asia Minor, within the bulwark of the Taurus. Apart from these, the general situation, whether

Great problem of the time—the barbarians.

under Arsacid, Sassanid, or Abbassid, presents features of wearisome identity, whether we are studying the reign of Augustus, of Severus I., of Galerius Maximianus II., of Julian, or of Heraclius; even, I had almost said, of Constantine IV. It would no doubt be perfectly possible to draw out carefully the exact points of difference in the aims, the arms, the methods of warfare at these various times; and it is indeed the duty of one indispensable class of historians to emphasise just the peculiar features of each age. But if our task from the first is rather to trace the continuous and inner life of the empire, we must ask if any substantial result or definite lesson can attend the most patient study of border warfare in the East? We have throughout the same curious and amicable relations between the monarchs, sometimes even a chivalrous confidence; the same ineffective tournaments, in which neither combatant is really in earnest. And if we ask for definite policy or result, the answer must be negative. Sapor and Bahram may sack Antioch and may besiege or hand over Nisibis; Severus, Galerius, and Heraclius may enter Oriental capitals in triumph, pillage royal palaces or capture harems; but there is never any question on either side of permanent conquest or incorporation.

Policy of exclusion or welcome? latter course under the better princes.

§ 7. This is a signal difference from the other foreign relation of Rome. The barbarian problem implied some sort of conscious policy; and this was never demanded or implied in the "razzias," which defied or retaliated in the East. The main interest down to the acute crisis under the sons of Theodosius lay in the *receptive* or *exclusive* answer to the ever-present difficulty. How far was the empire really cosmopolitan and world-wide, not indeed in territory, but in citizenship within the magic circle? The emperors started with the classical bias towards the finite, the limiting principle; they had none of that vague yearning for the infinite, which led Asiatic hordes under an able prince to spread in a few years from the Japanese Sea to Poland and Denmark, only

Policy of exclusion or welcome? latter course under the better princes.

to vanish in as many months. It was the first conscientious attempt to establish a state, other than a clan-city, on a peace footing. For hitherto the military and the civil conceptions had stood opposed irreconcilably. The Oriental monarchies had not attempted any more than the confederation of Delos to incorporate, to instruct, and to amalgamate. It is needless to accumulate words of astonished praise from Polybius and Josephus to the Gaul Namatianus, on this unwonted policy of peace and welcome. Now and again it received a set-back, when the franchise was withdrawn or given sparingly. But the curious privilege of a Roman commander, that of bestowing the citizenship, marks from the first the general tendency. Finding confluent streams of differing voice and effectiveness in the vague theory of the Porch and the genuine practice of the Church, the current surmounted all fragile and reactionary barriers and mastered the whole expanse. We watch with growing interest the barbarian prince as client or feudatory; the Germanic bodyguard of a Roman emperor; the rapid transition from treacherous foe to faithful legionary; for example, in the armies of Julius Agricola. And in spite of Arminius and Varus, in spite of the threats of the Batavians and the menace of those years of terror following Nero's death, we feel sure that there was nothing strictly incompatible between Teutonic personality and Roman law—rather each was the needful complement of the other. Nor can we forget that however profoundly modified in conception and scope and meaning, the imperial idea has lingered as a vital force among the Germans, while among the Latin race it is either extinct or travestied into the mockery of a brutal and spasmodic Cæsarism.

Let us return to the question of including the Teutonic races; and in the first place, let us remember the havoc of the years of plague. Finlay strikes a true (and in his age unusual) note by hymning as it were the effect of the pestilences, which slowly and

tragically traversed the empire under Aurelius, under Justinian, and again under Constantine V. In the middle of the second, the sixth, and the eighth centuries, the population of a large part of the empire was entirely renewed. And it is not to be doubted that the statesmen of the third, when they had leisure, must have witnessed with dismay the dwindling numbers of tillers and countrymen, and the fictitious sustenance of the town-dwellers in the larger centres, by the offer of gratuitous asylum to drones and incapables.

Policy of exclusion or welcome? latter course under the better princes.

The influence of Roman tradition transformed Maximinus I. into a zealous defender of the *limes* against barbarian attack; he has "forgotten his own people and his father's house"; he has transferred to his new masters a whole-hearted allegiance, which loses nothing when he himself becomes their lord. The unheard-of catastrophe of the Decii, significantly synonymous with the republican family of typical devotees for the public good, awoke a universal terror. After the feeble interlude of Gallus, the fruitless offer of Emilian, the reign of Valerian witnesses a serious purpose, to defend either frontier by a division of sovereignty. Severus I. in the first decade of this century may have had some such partition in view—a kind of family compact by which not the *imperium* only (according to the archaic republican usage) but the actual territory should be distributed, and a new capital founded for a new realm. Gallienus, a perplexing enigma, is stationed on the north to repel barbarians, just as the two Valentinians and Gratian a hundred years later. The importance and the uncertain temper of Gaul and its neighbours is a constant theme with Augustan historians. There indeed Latin letters enjoyed a brilliant revival in the panegyrists of the fourth, the poets, prince-bishops and Christian fathers of the fifth century. And the policy of Gallien would appear to have been most liberal and inclusive. While Titus all but destroyed his matchless and somewhat puzzling popularity by a proposed alliance with Bernice,

Policy of exclusion or welcome? latter course under the better princes.

Gallien wedded without comment, as a secondary partner of his throne, the barbarian Pipa. One can scarcely doubt that during his prolonged sojourn in the north, this accomplished and tactful man of the world performed more feats by diplomacy than by arms. He is a type of the later "barbarophil" or Teutonizer, that saw in the untutored and vigorous races the best recruits for Roman armies, the best colonists of Roman soil.

Claudius II. will have no parley with the barbarian; it is the old policy of war to the death; which was stultified by the inexhaustible and warlike multitudes of the north confronting the pacific and dwindling haunters of the circus—as they took their exercise and the hazard of a cruel sport, like our own proletariat to-day, by proxy. Aurelian is no doubt a reactionary by necessity; because armies just then were tiring of the constant parcelling of sovereignty, and after a period of centripetal license were anxious to show obedience to a genuine monarch. And it is Aurelian who gives up Dacia, engrossed in the one duty of interior unification. But with Probus again appears a foreign policy of conciliation and of firmness. He is perhaps the earliest prince to settle barbarians in thousands on Roman soil. We need not intrude into the era of Diocletian, and may well arrest our notice at this point. The armies of Rome had long been recruited from outside the frontier. The generals of Aurelian read like a Military Gazette of the fourth century rather than of the third. This internal colonising, this new military caste, are just the two most salient features of the later monarchy. The emperors could centralise and govern when civil and warlike functions were kept rigidly apart, and when the control of the departments was in the hands of groups of officials as widely differing as the Chinese *literatus* and the Manchu bannerman. But we must leave this period of welter and confusion, having marked the glimmer of continuous and conscious policy, of virtuous and ready

effort which can plainly be detected, if we have patience; having also traced its failure in the precarious existence of senatorial privilege and the difficulty of effecting a satisfactory division of province. We are captivated by the suggestion of Emilian; we recognise moments when the "dual control" was effectively realised; but we are in the end bound to admit that the overt absolutism of Diocletian in the next age was the sole remedy for the unsettlement of the third century.

Policy of exclusion or welcome? latter course under the better princes.

CHAPTER IV

CENTRALISED ABSOLUTISM; OR, THE SYSTEM OF DIOCLETIAN AND CONSTANTINE (285–337 A.D.)

C. Aurel. Valer. Diocletianus	284–305	.	milit. nom.
M. Aurel. Valer. Maximianus	285–305	.	co-opt.
C. Galerius Maximianus II.	305–311	.	adopt.
Julianus III. (Carth.)			
Carausius and Allectus (Britain)	286–293	.	milit. nom.

H. The "Flavian" Houses (Constantine, Valentinian, and Theodosius):

Flavius Valer. Constantius I. (great-nephew of Claud. II.)	305–306	.	adopt.
Flav. Val. Constantinus I.	306–337	.	birth.
Maximinus II. (or III.?)	308–313	.	co-opt.
Severus III.	307–308	.	co-opt.
Maxentius (son of Maximian I.)	306–312	.	milit. nom.
P. Valerius L'ianus Licinius III. and IV. (son)	308–323.		co-opt.

Inevitable tendency to centralisation.

§ 1. A GRADUAL and often reluctant advance to centralised control is the path usually taken by all political systems. To say that control is centralised seems to imply to many people that the administration is civilised; just as many theorists have believed that in the discovery of the exact site or pivot of sovereignty lies the key to the principles regulating the State. And this, in spite of the sympathetic sound on modern ears of the words "federalism" and "confederation." How to acquire the stability, safety, and long life of an organism, worked by a single brain, at the least possible sacrifice of personal or provincial freedom and initiative, is (it need scarcely be said) the chief problem of all earnest inquiry in this field. Against the seigneurial or parochial interest of feudal lord or commune, the drastic scheme of state-supremacy was elevated about the time of the Reformation into a principle, and expanded into a theory by an Italian text-book. And

Inevitable tendency to centralisation.

the one abiding result of that strange uprising of mind and matter in 1789 was to fix the triumph not of individual liberty but of central control. The contest in the new world of America after the middle of the nineteenth century likewise vindicated in its result the principle of centralism. The chief effect of the recognition of republican ideas is the denial of the rights of a minority. Yet by a significant anomaly in our representative usages, government for the time being is always in the hands of a minority. Interest and unanimity are lacking in most elections; an incontestable majority of the electorate is a phenomenon of great rarity; while it is clear in the case of the group-system that the predominance of party or person is almost entirely a matter of hazard and secret intrigue. But the seat of authority once seized by whatever means or right, the modern State inherits the ruthless and autocratic methods of the past. Government is less continuous but it is no less arbitrary. The time being short for the transient reformer or reactionary, every use must be made of a limited opportunity: *væ victis!* and *spolia victoribus* are the freely acknowledged maxims of enlightened administration, tempered by the cautious fear that the prostrate rival of to-day may be the master of to-morrow. Indeed, modern centralism is a somewhat curious feature of an age which has lost faith in so many principles. The justification of conviction and conscience saved the older State, even in its religious persecutions, from the charge of tyranny.

With the recognised freedom of thought in religious belief and observance (following the overthrow of the ancient idea of a ruler's responsibility and a subject's tutelage) there has emerged no similar freedom in convention or behaviour. And the power which may be exercised for the brief span of the supposed mandate is merely concerned with relieving the harm of the previous ruler—a Penelope's web. In a word, there is in most administration centralism without a centre; and the intrigues or self-seeking of

Inevitable tendency to centralisation.

obscure and irresponsible gangs are concealed under a mischievous generality, the Will of the People. Absolutism in the old world meant something more overt, frank, and continuous. However accidental the election, the once elected emperor enters into a full heritage of precedent, sentiment, and tradition, which somehow makes of most rude and unpromising material a national patriot and a careful administrator of the great estate of Augustus. One looks in vain for an absolutely unworthy pretender; and perhaps in the case of Phocas alone is this half-jesting salutation as Augustus wholly unjustified. This direct supervision and initiative saved the Roman world from those discreditable intrigues, whether of palace or of faction, that make the modern constitutional monarchy or representative republic the despair of honest men; have led to that abstention of the worthier and weightier citizens from public life, which is the great and inevitable evil, incident upon the nominal and insincere democracy of modern times.

It would be wrong to say that public opinion was in the year 300 A.D. as diffused, as sensitive, as alert, as we find it to-day in the more wholesome European societies; but it was certainly operative. It watched with increasing approval the systematic success of Diocletian, and endorsed the tumultuous election of the crafty avenger of Numerian. The last century had appreciated the mischief of decentralisation; and the reaction was certain to go too far in the opposite direction. Yet however we may regret the extrusion of the Senate's partnership, the severance of the departments of state and of arms, the heavy cost of a fourfold court, the deliberate orientalism of a shrewd monarch (himself without a trace of personal vanity), we cannot, save in a "thesis," deny the usefulness of this restoration, judged by any normal standard of the minimum of a State's duty to the subject. Nor in spite of Lactantius' angry protest against the whole system in the "Deaths

of the Persecutors," can we doubt the genuine public contentment which applauded the changes of Diocletian, and was upset by the tumults that ensued on his retirement: which once more hailed the reintegrated monarchy of Constantine, and the resumption of the new principles, modified as they were by the novel feature of heredity.

Inevitable tendency to centralisation.

§ 2. The outward history of the forty years between Diocletian's choice and the founding of Constantinople or the Synod of Nicæa is extremely simple. With the help of well-chosen lieutenants, an Illyrian commander recovers and once more makes sure the ancient frontier; Gaul, relapsing into barbarism and disorder, is pacified; Persian insolence sobered; Egypt, brought back from a precarious autonomy, is again added to the empire. The Adoptive System, excellent in theory like elective monarchy itself, breaks down under the pressure of parental bias. Twenty years may be given to the painful and prosperous reconstruction; and twenty again to its collapse and rebuilding on newer lines. The principle of adoptive nomination was in singular harmony with the early Roman conception of *imperium* — a magical gift conferred by a sort of apostolical succession. The holder is entitled to pass on this power undiminished and without further reference to the sovereign power whence he derived. But it runs clearly counter to two strong human instincts: the prejudice of a father who wants to found a dynasty, and the partiality of soldiers who in the young scions of an imperial family discover unsuspected merit. The early mutinies which assailed the insecure throne of Tiberius were quelled by this semi-feudal sentiment. Ready in a moment of pique and sullenness to follow the noisy demagogue, the army, being essentially aristocratic in texture and tradition, refuses in calmer moments to substitute him for the old names: "*Pro Neronibus et Drusis imperium capessent?*" At many epochs in this history of the sterile Cæsarate, it is pathetic to see how the limited but loyal intelligence of the troops clung to some

General survey of the period: weight of the Church.

stripling of real or fictitious descent from a regnant family.

General survey of the period: weight of the Church.

And the sympathy of the average man was with Constantine as he climbed to the same unique position, which Diocletian had seized, had fortified, and had surrendered. Both in his attitude to the new creed, and in his relation to the new races, Constantine represented the larger policy, the wider tolerance and receptivity. Standing ninth or tenth in the great series of Illyrian emperors, he inherits and consummates all their purpose, and he adds to their masterful yet generous scheme the adroit alliance with the Church. There is besides these vague, general features of the years 284–324 no dark and tangled principles at war, no secret and half-conscious force pressing to the light. The world is quite content to acquiesce in a firm government; and had no taste for the renewal of tumult. Society agreed to pay the price demanded. The increasing and homogeneous body of Christian believers hailed in Constantine the "saviour of society" and the bringer of tolerance. In no other section of mankind was there a body of belief so uniform, a public opinion so consistent; and the Church threw her silent but effective weight into the scale:—

"Momentumque fuit mutata Ecclesia rerum."

Changes of Diocletian adverse to personal rule; modern royalty.

§ 3. The design of Diocletian was simple and straightforward. He had seen the fearful uncertainty of the Cæsar's life and was determined to safeguard the person who embodied the majesty of Rome. In spite of the undoubted revival of moral tone and public spirit after Maximinus I. there had arisen among the troops an absolute disregard of the sacrosanct character of the emperor. This was to be restored at all costs—even at the price of adopting expedients very unacceptable to the rough soldiers of camps. All historians speak in the same terms of the so-called "Orientalism" of this reformer; to hide away the chief Augustus in mysterious seclusion and surround him with pomp

and countless retinue. And of this curious stream of ceremonial we can trace the course down to the strict and sacred court-etiquette of Constantine VII. Nor is Finlay wrong in assuring us that to the Byzantines this empty parade seemed the loftiest of human sciences; its punctilious performance the highest earthly privilege and duty. We cannot doubt that the institution of such formula acted upon the ritual of the Church, and itself borrowed much from ecclesiastical sources. We are just at the point where the very seat and source of earthly power is to undergo a subtle change. No Roman jurist, however arbitrary the exercise of imperial power, ever doubted that the people bestowed and could resume. Justinian himself, whom Agathias calls the first genuine autocrat, prefaces his work with a candid recognition of his *delegated* authority, as the people's representative or vicegerent.

Changes of Diocletian adverse to personal rule; modern royalty.

Whatever halo of divine descent might gather round the early Julio-Claudian house, whatever temples and cult the grateful Orient might establish for the peace-givers, however a natural syncretism might identify, perhaps in distant Spain, the Cæsar of the hour with some local tutelar,—there was never any serious doubt as to the essentially secular and popular basis of the imperial rule. It is no doubt often pointed out that while the whole prestige and indirect influence of modern royalty depends on antecedent divine right, the Roman Cæsar was only God by a free and generous acclamation after a jealous scrutiny of merit when his life's chapter had closed. It is not too much to say that here lies one difference that for ever separates the modern from the classic world: hereditary right, often derided and explained away, yet none the less (perhaps all the more) valid and influential; and official rank. And it is interesting to note that the immediate claim of a dynast, without further choice or recognition, is more and more fully established. The Roman emperor would date his reign from a senatorial vote of tribunitian power; never for a

Changes of Diocletian adverse to personal rule; modern royalty.

moment was he allowed to forget the respectable and magistratial character of an authority unchecked in practice. Teutonic royalty consecrates with a mythic halo a certain family, but primogeniture is lacking, and in this narrow field there is a distinct freedom of election.

The reign dates from the popular "recognition" by the armed host, the elevation on the shield, and later, from the joint civil and religious ceremony of anointing, wherein meet Teutonic custom and the tradition of Jewish monarchy. But in the advance towards a new centralism out of piecemeal disorder, in the reviving conception of the State as an organism which marks the later Middle Age, the king, or rather the heir to kingship, seems to rise superior, independent of the tumultuous election of his "leuds" or the holy oil of his coronation. Important maxims of statecraft unite with feudal deference to an eldest son to create that strangest fiction, the royal "corporation sole," continuous and undying. The "divine right of kings," "the king can do no wrong," "the king never dies"; such are the foremost of the new principles. It would be impossible to conceive views more utterly at variance with the maxims of the empire. The "right divine" does not adhere, as with us, to a certain family of mythologic antiquity, "by right" (as King Edward VII. writes to his Indian liegemen) "of immemorial lineage"—it is inherent in the people which confers or abrogates, in the assembly which can canonise and beatify, or condemn to lasting infamy. Again and again we must point out the personal responsibility of the Cæsar for good government, and the absence of any fiction of ministerial accountability, which has often shielded in the past (and will often in the future shield) the masterful exercise of invisible sovereign power by the sovereign himself. The emperor was not irremovable, and the right to criticise was never in effect denied. In fact, one chief cause of the apprehensive jealousy of rulers, feeling that their popularity was declining, lay in the

anomalous position. They bore the brunt of misfortune and failure; it was not recognised as an excuse that "the sovereign had been ill-advised." Lastly, the maxim of the indefeasible continuity of the ruling line was unknown to the ancients. Behind the calm assumption of the power, as if by hereditary right, lay a civil vote, a military acclamation (endorsed indeed by a civil vote), in any case the fiction of open and unfettered election.

Changes of Diocletian adverse to personal rule; modern royalty.

§ 4. In the transition from the classical to the modern conception, Diocletian plays no inconsiderate part. He realises how insecure is the overweighted official, heavily responsible, ever accessible, and all-embracing. The sovereignty reposing in him was liable in a moment to be extinguished by the sword of the assassin; and needed to be ever and again rekindled, as it were, either from the smouldering embers of a sedentary Senate or the brandished torch of military insurrection. It has been well said that the Roman emperor passes from the Senate to the camp, and from the camp to the palace. At first he is merely the executive, the right hand of an unarmed assembly; which concentrates in itself the wisdom and experience of the State, but being only advisory or consultative cannot give effect to its decision. For it must be remembered that the "prince-president" is as necessary for the safety and integrity of the Senate as he was loudly demanded by the financial classes and by the provincials. The natural feud between a now inopportune clan-government and the imperialism of successful generals had issued into open daylight. It was in the highest degree expedient that the Senate should recognise one of the powerful pretenders as its own delegate; and from one point this recognition is just the most salient feature in the establishment of the Cæsar. State-needs too summoned the chief noble of Rome, living among his peers, to be the itinerant warder of the marches; and from the middle of the reign of Marcus this paramount duty only allows infrequent

Government passed from Senate to camp,—and now to palace.

Government passed from Senate to camp,—and now to palace.

visits to the metropolis. It was the deliberate intent of our Camillus of the Lower Empire to exchange the barrack-room for the palace, as the centre, the source, and the seat of sovereignty. It would have been useless to have restored the nomination to the Fathers, edifying as was the deference of the military caste during the interregnum following Aurelian's death. For the Senate laboured always under this disability; that being defenceless and without agents it could never enforce and indeed had rarely occasion to initiate.

The system of tumultuous salutation by a chance group of soldiers was self-condemned; and there was no one to propose the modern panacea, a free and popular election by universal suffrage and the ballot. Once more, after a long interlude, the palace (the *divina domus* as it is called, even under Aurelius in the second century) becomes the exclusive seat of power; and the palatine officials usurp pre-eminence over the servants of the State. Thus the nomenclature and the precedence of the rough Illyrian peasant survives in the etiquette of modern courts; and the whole retinue of royalty derives its origin from the Romanising despotism of the Merovingian, and from the conscious revival of Roman tradition by Charles or by Otto III. It was equally derogatory to the dignity of a senator or a Teutonic noble to serve as a menial in the house of the titular sovereign. It was this mistaken pride, as we have noted, and shall have occasion to repeat, which lodged power under the Claudian house in the hands of supple and subservient Greeks. For it is a uniform tradition of autocracy that it prefers a foreign hand to execute its decrees on its subjects; let the Christian and Georgian agents of early Turkish rule, or the German bureaucracy of Russia to-day, bear witness to this truth. The Teutons, it is true, made an important exception in favour of the "county," the retinue—which assembled for purely warlike purpose and the discipline of arms under a notable chieftain of men,

no doubt acquired more pacific duties during the rare intervals of peace. Tacitus remarks with equal surprise that it is no disgrace for the freeborn to be seen among the servitors of a gallant captain; and that it is the strange custom of Germany to defer the title and perhaps even the rights of prince to some youthful stripling of royal or ducal birth. In the latter part of the third century the staff-corps, *l'état-majeur*, formed an assembly of notable warriors who disposed of the crown. We shall find this practice again when a crisis once more places power in the hands of officers on a campaign, when the "prince," who unites so many anomalous functions, is pre-eminently for the time being an *imperator;* and such was the elevation of Jovian and of Valentinian. But it was mainly Diocletian's object to rescue the succession from this constant jeopardy. And in bringing out once more the sacred and almost magical faculty lodged in the people's representative, and by him alone transmissible to a successor, he believed he had established a permanent solution of that problem, which awaits all but hereditary dynasts. He lived long enough to confess his error; he saw the inexorable pressure of the family instinct, the natural reverence of the simple for a father's son. And though he saw it not, he may well have anticipated the further development, which will be illustrated in our next period—the supremacy of the courtier and the chamberlain.

Government passed from Senate to camp,—and now to palace.

Indeed, just the same process has, within the past two hundred years, transformed the Manchu sovereigns of China from the warlike and active supervisors of the general welfare into the puppets and prisoners of a palace, where only the sagacity of females can penetrate the deep veil of intrigue. It is indeed possible to fix the exact moment when a policy of mysterious immurement like that of Diocletian succeeded the earlier conception of an accessible if not ubiquitous ruler. Twice in the first decade of last century was the life of the Chinese emperor attempted

Government passed from Senate to camp,—and now to palace.

—a rare display of unwonted profanity; and it was to safeguard the incarnation of the State, or rather the universal parent and mediator, that the present system was unhappily adopted. Thus the greatest and most ideal monarchy, which, whether in theory or in achievement, merited much of the eulogy lavishly bestowed by the Encyclopædists, became a mere Oriental monarchy of the customary type—that is, a complete divorce of actual and nominal sovereignty. For there are two vague desires operative (as we have already seen) in the concept of a ruler; men wish to see the head of the State at once safe and respected, and vigorous and personal. That these two features are in reality incompatible is plain to any practical statesman or philosophical theorist. There can be no effective permanence in an office which is exposed to the results of criticism and of failure. Volney, in his "Ruins," has a passage pregnant with unconscious irony, where he describes the enfranchised people, at the very moment of recovered freedom, as delegating all its new-found powers to others. It would be interesting to know how he would have justified this prompt and hasty surrender of the costly privilege of self-government. For to us who can speak with the experience of the nineteenth century, it is this indifference of the people to misrule which constitutes the real menace of an age supposed to be democratic, and gives impunity to unscrupulous and self-seeking statesmen. Now although Diocletian is by no means so explicit and candid, he labours, or appears to labour, under the same delusion.

He would like to have maintained both the *sanctity* and the *effectiveness* of imperial, as our modern idealists of popular, control. But it is clear that this incarceration of the sovereign is fatal to the old Roman theory of drastic personal supervision. Nothing, in effect, saved the Cæsar from sinking into a mere Mikado or Lama but the undying tradition of his inseparable military duties. It is this emergence

into a busy and perilous society, where formula and etiquette are not everything, which makes the softly-nurtured sons of strenuous leaders, Constance II. and Gratian, something better than the invisible Honorius. But meantime, in the long interludes of peace, power quietly slipped into unrecognised hands; just those men whose personal duties kept them nearest the sovereign, really controlled the promotion of the civilian or the soldier and the general administration of the realm. In fact, this overt acknowledgment of centralism and autocracy then, as always, implied on the practical side a withdrawal of all efficient control from the monarch. As neither *one* man nor *all* men can really govern, as strict monarchy or precise democracy is a pure chimæra, the first duty, whether in a republic or a despotism, is to inquire who will do the work, which in their very nature neither monarch nor multitude can perform. The long turmoil to which the sanguine speculators or conspirators of the last century in Europe pointed as the triumph of liberty and enlightenment, did not substitute the "Will of the People" for the caprice of an autocrat. For both these (with rare and striking exceptions) are mere fictions of interested pleaders. A new governing class forces itself to the front, and the State, without relaxing any of its pretensions to absolute sway, is captured by a new party—of intellect, or of wealth, or of scientific progress. And it cannot be denied that personal sovereignty and monarchic influence has largely gained by this sometimes ignoble transference of power.

Government passed from Senate to camp,—and now to palace.

Just as Hadrian had more first-hand knowledge of his empire than Honorius, and exerted that open or indirect influence which belongs to the keen-eyed traveller, so to Edward VII. or to William II. is given in virtue, not of defined prerogative, but of effective and matchless insight, a power unknown to Lewis XVI. or the later Philips of Spain. It is one of the paradoxes of history that as a story's moral interest vanishes in the telling and amplification, so prerogative

Government passed from Senate to camp,—and now to palace.

will disappear in its promulgation. When you have established the formal seat of sovereignty on a logical basis, there is the further question usurping all genuine attention, who shall exercise it? Diocletian, like so many great rulers, believed he was founding an enduring edifice. But he had estimated human nature by himself. Strangely above petty ends and selfish aims, he had left out of his calculation two important elements in the average man; and he it is who is "always with us," while the man of genius or the reformer is (as Alexander I. says of a good autocrat) "a happy accident." He hoped that fathers would pass over their sons, and that sons would forget their father's titles and renown, and sink uncomplaining into a private lot. And he believed that a sedentary and secluded ruler could administer the empire. In both these expectations he was deceived. He had made no allowance for the play of average feeling, or for the disability of the average ruler. Both were intimately connected; for not only the scion of a reigning house but also the people at large believe that he is especially fitted for a certain task by birth; and these, when they are undeceived, continue to reproach him with failure or misrule, for which, in the nature of the case, he is the last person who is actually responsible. Diocletian, while seeking to restore personal rule, in reality ended it. In the next generation the emperor will be known as one who has a certain influence with his chief minister!

Diocletian sums up the past; stereotypes the silent changes of the century.

§ 5. From this general appreciation of his policy and forecast of its outcome, we must turn to the more special treatment of his reforms. And it would at once appear that Diocletian is no bold innovator, like Napoleon or Peter the Great. If we look closely at the preceding age we shall see there in embryo the germ of all his revolutionary projects. Nor is it any disparagement to the great talent or public service of the man to show that he recognised and co-ordinated prevalent tendencies into a system,

rather than destroyed and built up anew after an original design. We have, as may be hoped, shown that the apparent anarchy of the third century is by no means lacking in constructive features; that the protagonists in this scene of confusion are not devoid of a strong sense of public duty and personal loyalty. It would be unfair indeed to dismiss that age as a mere battlefield of "kites and crows." Diocletian sums up its chief tendencies; indeed he looks backward rather than forward, and is the child of his own age rather than the parent of a new epoch — *aurei sæculi parens*, as his dutiful historiographer terms him. I suppose that the chief subterranean currents only issuing later into daylight were three: the fissiparous tendency of East and West; the divorce of the civilian and military duties and careers; and the Germanising not merely of the armies but of the soil of Rome. It will be needful to devote attention to these three problems of absorbing interest; to trace the sundering of the two main divisions of the realm; to analyse the motives for the separation of the two great services of State; to revert (without, I hope, wearisome repetition) to the undying problem of the relations of the new and vigorous peoples descending on a depleted empire, which suffered from nothing so much as lack of men.

Diocletian sums up the past; stereotypes the silent change of the century.

And first, it had been long apparent that the unwieldy bulk of the empire surpassed the powers of a single ruler, however vigorous. The tendency to split appears as early as the first serious barbarian menace under Marcus Aurelius. Every succeeding monarch who was something more than the well-meaning creature of circumstance, reverted to some kind of scheme for halving immediate responsibility without impairing the solidarity of the empire; for the *imperium* was not a concrete realm in our sense, but a unique; *cujus* (as Cyprian might say of it no less than of the Christian episcopate) *a singulis in solidum pars tenetur*. Itself, since the

Diocletian sums up the past; stereotypes the silent changes of the century.

days of kingship, still infinite and comprehensive, it was capable of wide distribution, without the general representation losing its integral validity; it was a sort of "sacrament" miraculously multiplied in its integrity without losing its inherent grace. Against centralised power in wrong hands the expedient was to multiply checks and colleagues; and it was to remedy the dislocated mechanism that once more authority was given in the aggregate to a single ruler without a partner. Yet after the close of the second century a partner was often voluntarily chosen, and the duties divided. We vainly desire to know what truth lies beyond the fable of Severus' partition of empire. Would he have forestalled Constantine and Theodosius in choosing a new capital and two stripling princes to succeed to rival thrones? or again, was it a mere expedient to alleviate the suspicious jealousy of two brothers, like Romulus and Remus? or lastly, is it a mere suggestion of a rhetorician? It must be remembered, if it is this last, if Herodianus fancies where Dio Cassius knows nothing, it is none the less significant. If one chief purpose of this volume is to show the hidden and unconscious forces which long before recognition have already accomplished their aim, it is also our design to show the bias of contemporary feeling, and to seek to gather what the actors and writers of the time thought of that wonderful and yet perplexing heritage which they were too near to understand fully. And Herodianus, writing some forty years later, may well reflect a current interpretation of the fratricidal quarrel and of the suggestion which was to cure it. Towards the close of his history comes the dual empire of Maximus II. and Balbinus; and although this regards the discrepant duties of peace and war rather than any partition of territory, yet it certainly contemplates two separate places of official residence. The next reign which has any leisure for a definite policy shows the division of East and West an accomplished fact; under Valerianus and Gallienus

the severance is as real as under Valentinian I. and Valens, or Gratian and Theodosius.

Division of Eastern and Western realms: their different fate.

§ 6. The example they set seems to have influenced the firm but impressionable Diocletian. East and West had different problems; in the West robber-bands, *jacquerie*, and (to believe the brilliant speculations of Seeck) a predominant population of foreign and Teutonic birth, replacing the void left by a plague which cost the empire half its subjects. In the East, religious and racial feuds, which in a later age introduced triumphant Islam without a blow into Egypt and Syria; and the long-standing enmity with Persia, of which we have already spoken enough. The character and tone of the two spheres differed essentially. In the West, Rome had introduced her own culture and urban life. Eastern institutions and religions long pre-existed the conquest; and Roman control, leaving alone with Gallio the strange bitterness of rival creeds or neighbourly animosities, partook largely of the nature of a protectorate, which only interferes when affairs reach a crisis. A Roman emperor in Antioch, like Julian or Valens, is something of an alien, an "outsider." He may have and exert power of sword or pen, but he does not enter into the inner life of the people, either religious or social. Indeed he resembles much an Austrian commandant in Venice before the reunion of Italy in our own time.

When therefore the Roman emperor passes to a definite seat of his own in the East, he insensibly changes character. Diocletian is still a successor of Augustus and the Antonines, in spite of his jewels, his diadem, and his servitors. But Constantine is not; and this is due not merely to his change of creed, but largely to his novel orientation. With Constance II. the type is entirely modernised; we have a ruler who in scrupulous behaviour, limited but sincere aims, resembles no one so much as Philip II. of Spain, unless indeed it be Philip III. Thus the divorce of East and West had long been threatened; and our reformer

Division of Eastern and Western realms: their different fate.

in vain disguised the reality of the separation by his own native superiority to his colleagues; "to his nod" (says one historian) "all things were administered." The appointment of Maximianus Herculius seems to revive the ideal of the Senate in 238; one Augustus to be the brain, sedentary and pacific, the other to be the arm, of the State—in fact, Odin and Thor. But it was really the prelude to the great struggle of the fourth century; Constantine against Licinius, Constance II. against Magnence, Theodosius against Maximus III. and the nominee of Arbogast; to the great rivalries and suspicions of the fifth century, between the ministers of Honorius and of Arcadius, Johannes and Theodosius II.: to the failure of the last expedition of a united empire, against Africa. Nor had the Church been a bond of genuine union: the West had followed with puzzled surprise or indifference the intricacies of the Arian controversy; the Oriental temper made of the Christian religion a very different matter. We wonder if Diocletian was under any veritable illusion as to the outcome of his policy of two Augusti, each with a separate capital. Whatever his intention, it is clear that he followed rather than initiated. He set his seal to the whole development of the third century, to the subtle and tentative changes, on the new path, when perhaps the African Severus was the pioneer and can justly lay claim to originality. He used the materials which lay ready to his hand, like every great man; for it is only the visionary or the logician who sets up an abstract Utopia and would reconstruct only by tearing down.

We may indeed doubt if Diocletian was at any given moment conscious of taking a step in a new direction. Like Augustus, he deemed himself a restorer of old traditions, and he went back to the Antonines for an ideal. Thus in this partition of the republic, "one and indivisible," he was following precedent and obeying the clamorous demand of the State for a multiplied, a more efficacious, executive.

His unique contribution is the complicated machinery of the Sacred College, the attempt to bring even into the Principate the rigorous discipline and slow promotion that prevailed elsewhere. The future master of the world, or at least of one half, must learn in a lengthy apprenticeship, and come late and expert, after laborious *wanderjahre*, to the place of head of the imperial firm. And while the division became a necessary and permanent tradition, it was precisely this original and peculiar suggestion that vanished in a few years as lifeless and obsolete as the paper constitutions of De Sieyès.

Division of Eastern and Western realms: their different fate.

BOOK II

PROBLEMS OF THE NEW MONARCHY AND THE NEW SUBJECTS; OR, THE LIMITATIONS OF AUTOCRACY AND THE BARBARIAN OFFER

CHAPTER I

THE NEW SYSTEM OF CASTE AND OFFICIALISM; THE SEVERANCE OF CIVIL AND MILITARY ORDERS; AND THE INFLUX OF ALIENS

Civilisation tends both to centralise and to specialise.

§ 1. Let us now turn to our second feature of interest in the reforms of the age of Constantine, the severance of civil and military function. We are on still safer ground in proclaiming the indebtedness of the reorganisers. Here Diocletian did but ratify and endorse; he completes a tendency working to an inevitable goal, in this century of ferment and confusion. The origins of this separation we may trace as early as the great African house of Severus I., which thus again comes before us, guide and innovator. Rather is it hard to conceive how the two careers could have remained so long intertwined—so far are we from feeling surprise at the change. Here an existing usage is reduced to conscious system; and the hasty student is tempted to believe that the moment of recognition and formula is also the moment of birth. The antique conception of the citizen represents to us an interchangeable peasant-farmer and volunteer-soldier, of which Cincinnatus may well stand as type, passing easily from camp to plough, and from field to council-chamber. The revolution in economics and in policy, which rendered a citizen-army impossible, tended directly to the overthrow of civil government without penalty or sanction, and to the reign of force and egoism. We have occasion again to repeat that in the very constitution and nature of the Senate lay two good reasons for its failure in a far from perfect world: it had no agents to carry out its wishes in general

The 'Admirable Crichton' and the confiding State.

The 'Admirable Crichton' and the confiding State.

administration, and in a special crisis it had no means of self-defence. It may appear to be a paradox to assert that the singular innocence of the early State did not, as we do, contemplate the need of police and physical reinforcement of custom and law. Yet the whole political current—the development of Rome and the break-up of the Colossus into the rival fragments of modern Europe—would seem (in one aspect) to take its rise from this generous confidence in human nature.

It is quite true that in its primitive stages the code of tribal custom, usage, and prohibition is mixed up, indeed confounded, with religious taboo; and it may be asserted that this generally implies an immediate physical penalty as well as a moral disability. Yet I do not think most students of our origins will dispute the unshaken dominion over the savage mind of what we must call *moral* influences; such as are not by any means directly translated into the obvious discomfort of scourging or mutilation. Law and penalty really come into existence, not for the members of the family or the clan (where disobedience and ostracism are sufficient to deter), but to regulate the relation of this group with the new neighbours or inmates, the captives of war whom a growing sense of humanity or of interest preserves for serfdom. The ancient State, in spite of its civil tumults, is singularly slow to establish any effective machinery of control over its refractory members. Though dissension and feud is, at least in historic times, the rule rather than the exception, the State seems always puzzled and taken aback when it is defied. It comes only gradually and with extreme reluctance to recognise the perversity or depravation of human nature, which will yield only to the persuasion of force. It has recourse to coercive measures just at the same time when interest in a narrow city and belief in the divine tradition seem to dwindle and expire together. The old fallacy vanishes that men will obey law because it "is so written," will entertain

an instinctive respect for ancestral custom when the reason for it is forgotten, the performance inconvenient. Only a few vociferous and sentimental idealists to-day can entertain such a view; but their ill-founded conviction, denied by history and personal experience, constitutes a real danger to the basis of the modern State; and if realised prepares the way for the release of restraint, the quarrels of nation or of class, and—the inevitable outcome—the armed, ruthless, but at least impartial, "saviour of society." *The 'Admirable Crichton' and the confiding State.*

§ 2. Such was the position of the Roman Senate. The wider the commonwealth and the more numerous the elements of race or creed that refuse to amalgamate, the more urgent is the need of an incontestable seat of authority, to act, if the crisis demand, instantaneously and irresponsibly. It was the signal merit of the imperial system that, having won its place by arms, it began at once to rule by pacific methods and in the interests of peace. It merely held in reserve, and at a great distance from the centre, the armies whose personal loyalty had served Cæsar and Octavianus so well. Prompt public opinion upheld Vespasian in his reconquest of autocracy; two years saw the end of a struggle which about a century earlier was painfully lengthened, in the rivalry of Pompey and Cæsar, of Antony and Augustus. There was much sincerity in the attempt to make the dual control a working expedient. But if the Senate had no power of direct initiative, and no ready hand of executive, it had unlimited power of conspiracy. Relations were embittered, and the degeneration of the reign of the "bad prince" can be traced invariably to such suspicion. Yet the civil element was still predominant, whatever might have been the emperor's summary right of court-martial and of execution. *The Senate superseded as archaic: late rise of permanent military caste.*

The essentially pacific character of the Senate is recognised from the outset: Augustus, in appropriating the military provinces of doubtful security, is the forerunner both of Gallienus and of Diocletian. When once the older form of rule was pronounced incom-

The Senate superseded as archaic: late rise of permanent military caste.

patible with the newer and more strenuous, the definite outcome may take three hundred years to reach, but it is merely a question of time. Individual members indeed of the Senate might rise, like Agricola, up a staircase of offices, in which civil and military functions were beautifully blended or alternated. But the august body itself becomes merely majestic and consultative—a relic of the old group of elderly clansmen with whom the father would discuss a family crisis. It was in vain that Augustus and indeed Tiberius endeavoured to give it a genuine share in government, confiscated popular privilege to enhance its dignity, and complained, not without real frankness, of its disinclination for business. It laboured under two great disabilities; it disdained to take subordinate and responsible office under its elected chief, and it had no independent executive apart from the emperor. And now we are confronted with another phase of the eternal problem—who is to blame for the badness or the mischievous measures of a government? Has a people always the rulers which it deserves? Is the absence of public opinion due to inherent weakness of the governed or to the despotic suppression of the governors? At the moment, our problem takes this form: was it the fault of the Senate's insolent and mistaken pride that it refused to serve under a master, retired into a voluptuous or learned seclusion, and left the field open, like the nobles of France at the present time, to a very different class of men; more supple and capable, often more trustworthy, but without traditions, sense of personal or family honour, or that deference to public opinion, which is in truth typical of the aristocrat and not of the parvenu? Or was it the fault of the emperor's jealousy? Up to our own days this latter verdict has been almost unanimously accepted; it fitted in with the now exploded belief that national character or prosperity depended on the precise form of government, and that the ruler was responsible for all the sins and shortcomings of his subjects. But in truth, the real

solution must lie midway; senatorial incapacity or suspicious reserve, emperor's doubt as to the wisdom of employing senators, acted and reacted. No one can deny that the imperial line, whether its members consciously willed it or no, sought the public good, the impartial administration of law, the maintenance of unbroken "Roman peace." It represented, so far as the economic, racial, and religious difficulties would permit, freedom and equality; and it worked persistently, with incredible industry and patience, sometimes through the strangest of instruments like Caracalla, towards a lofty humanitarian goal. But the Senate always represented a narrow and exclusive oligarchy, and was even to the very last out of sympathy with the aims of liberal imperialism.

The Senate superseded as archaic: late rise of permanent military caste.

§ 3. After long disuse of arms, the empire was rudely awakened under Marcus to the pressing needs of self-defence. Severus, a foreigner, was obliged to stamp out civil war, and to refuse explicitly the offer of a dangerous partnership. The reconstruction of the African ruler is largely a matter of conjecture; but we cannot doubt that his distrust of the senatorial order was well-founded. He may not have given his children the cynical advice which historians put into his mouth; but he must have seen that the military basis needed strengthening in the interests of peace and safety, and that a school of experts, of professional soldiers, reared and nurtured in the traditions of the camp, was essential to the State. It was to be a set-off, a make-weight, to the other side of Roman and provincial life. And no doubt the good Septimius believed it possible to confine the interests and the activity of the military caste within due limits. He could not foresee, in a reign notably marked by the brilliance of its legal achievements, that it would soon claim and acquire a monopoly of interest. Military revolutions dominate the scene after the extinction of his line; though we have been at pains to show the definite policy and undoubted usefulness

Empire pacific in aim; new need of professional soldiers.

Empire pacific in aim; new need of professional soldiers.

of these pretenders. And it was still thought possible to keep apart the civil functions of the Senate and the duties of frontier defence. Direct evidence of an imperial prohibition for a senator to carry arms is (as is well known) confined to a single passage in Aurelius Victor; besides, we have a vague surmise that Antoninus V. (211–217) dispensed with the presence of nobles in his eastern or northern camps, and wrote bitter and ironical letters to the Conscript Fathers contrasting his hard and simple life with their studied inactivity. There are besides some traces in epigraphy of personal immunity granted as a favour to individuals, at least as early as the time of Commodus Antoninus IV. (180–192). If the edict of Gallien did not perfectly represent one aspect of a tendency which elsewhere we know to have been predominant, we should never attach such weight to a fragmentary testimony of a late writer in the reign of Valens. But it accords well with our surmises, and forms a presage of the future division. Yet, to tell the truth, it is not quite like Gallienus, who attempted to curb the pride of the soldiers, was a bold and sagacious defender of the frontier, and managed to maintain his throne longer than any Cæsar in the third century, from Severus to Diocletian. The passage somewhat resembles the naïve ætiology of a chronicler, who has to explain the retirement of the noble class from active life, and wishes to give chapter and verse and a definite moment of time for a long and insensible process. I find it hard to reconcile with his character, a mixture of studied and not impolitic indifference and of real ability both as statesman and warrior. That he was terrified at the rare enterprise and public spirit of the Senate in taking arms to defend Rome, that he trembled lest the "empire should be transferred to the best of the aristocracy," seems inherently improbable. If we may believe the plain teaching of the third century, this exclusion was already an accomplished fact; and we prefer to place in the

years 200–230, in the first quarter of the century, the obscure steps of this process; which in the end left a well-born but effeminate nobility confronting an army of foreigners and of mercenaries who despised them. A definite imperial policy to decimate and enfeeble the Senate only dates from the return of Severus from the overthrow of Albinus; and even Dion praises his clemency in pardoning thirty-five senators implicated in the scheming of the rival camp. With Bassianus Antoninus V. defiance of the Senate became a mania; and the nadir of their prestige and authority is reached in the reigns of Macrinus and his son, and of the last and unworthiest of the line of Antonines. Never were they consulted as to the transmission of the purple; and the East celebrates its most signal and degraded victory over the West, under the youthful priest of Emesa; then truly, *in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*. I am obliged to recall, that this section may be complete in itself, the decision already reached in the last; namely, that an entire reconstruction of the principles of government took place under Severus II. and Mammæa (222–235). Then a great reaction swept away the strange foreigners who had shown open hate or contempt for Rome and its Senate, had deified Hannibal, the foe of the republic, and Alexander of Macedon; or had disgusted what still remained of public opinion by the open display of Oriental vices.

Empire pacific in aim; new need of professional soldiers.

We attach some importance to the contrast between "præsidial" and "legatorial" provinces (Lamprid., *Alex. Sev.* § 24). It is difficult not to sympathise with the rapid but tempting conclusion of Borghesi, who believes that henceforward a "president" held the pacific functions, jurisdiction, and administrative work, while a *dux* controlled the often itinerant forces of alien origin. But I cannot conceal the fact, that at the very moment when *præses* seems to acquire a special and technical use, Macer, writing under the same reign (Dig. i. 18), tells us it is a general term and will cover all governors

Empire pacific in aim; new need of professional soldiers.

sent out to administer the provinces ("*Præsidis nomen generale est, eoque et proconsules et legati Cæsaris et omnes* (m.) *provincias regentes . . . præsides appellantur*"). At the same time no reader of third century annals will, I think, deny that the military caste tends to assume a crisp and definite distinction, a needful continuity of function; in the domestic and foreign perils, which would allow little leisure for the old vicissitudes of office, and the easy and harmless passage from one service to the other. We have besides convincing testimony that the third century was in common life not the scene of confusion which we usually picture. There was in civil and social life nothing of that hopeless and despondent anarchy which marked the reign of Phocas (602–610), the absolute overthrow of old institutions which rendered imperative the work of Heraclius:—nothing of slow and almost unnoticed ebbing in the tide of Roman dominion, such as we must witness in Britain, Gaul, and Spain during the fifth century. It is surprising to find that no disturbance took place during the six months' interregnum that ensued on Aurelian's death. We may indeed assume, in that period of rare modesty and temperateness in the *military* department, in the now penitent armies of assassins, that the civil service can have relaxed none of its accustomed vigilance, and that the great machine of government continued its task with the same precision as if it had still a visible head. It would be a paradox to style the chief feature of that age an irrepressible tendency to bureaucratic government; yet it is clear that such work was effectively done and that the transient princes had no time to devote to its supervision. Is it not possible that the reign of the second Severus witnessed the careful excogitation of a safeguard to the caprice or minority or uncertain tenure of the sovereign? After the strange anti-Roman sympathies of "Caracallus," and the still stranger excesses of his supposed son, it was no wonder if more serious minds embraced the oppor-

tunity of a peaceful interval to establish some definite and systematic procedure.—The pretensions of the Senate to regulate and to control, which we find in the Augustan reigns of Tacitus and Probus did not, I imagine, represent mere vague recollections of dim republican or early imperial tradition, but a certain reality within their own experience, when the entire body or a committee settled civilian procedure and promotion. Diocletian indeed disqualified the Senate from the competition for power, not indeed with the jealous and set purpose of humbling aristocratic pride and unmasking the power of the sword;—but because the meridian no longer passed through Rome,—a suburban capital with a great past and the present burden of an idle, needy, and riotous population. He centralised, just as in a later century Basilius I. and Leo VI. will be said to centralise. He made everything issue from the sacred palace, which was now guarded with redoubled care. He abolished the co-ordinate source of authority,—at least in its general recognition or effective control. Civil and military provinces alike were to be accountable solely to the head of the State; but in the severance of these two, into parallel lines which run side by side but never meet, he followed a current which had been flowing steadily for perhaps sixty years.

Empire pacific in aim; new need of professional soldiers.

§ 4. There has been, I fear, a departure from the usual design, both in repetition of matter from a preceding section and in the introduction of detail or testimony. Nor can I hope to have convinced students, or probed the matter beyond controversy. But it seems important at the opening of a new age, to point out the contrast; what is judged to be original, and what is strictly only an endorsement and continuance of preceding policy. The subject of the separation of the civilian and military careers is by no means exhausted; but enough has now been said for the general survey, already tending to the over-minute and particular. And I will only point to the third and final feature, the Germanising of soil and

Influx of barbarians; land and legions: division of payers and workers.

Influx of barbarians; land and legions: division of payers and workers.

of army at the beginning of the fourth century, and the issues with which this transformation is pregnant. Nor need we spend much time now over a subject which has already engrossed our attention and must do so again.

Indeed, the entire tendency of civilisation leads to a Platonic specialism of function. The advance of culture and complexity rather narrows than enlarges the vision, sphere, and the usefulness of average man. The greater number are fixed immovably in certain sedentary occupations, whether of brain-work (so-called!) in office and bank, or of manual labour in manufactory and warehouse. As each year passes, some further subdivision of territory is made, some new piece cut off to make a separate study. Not for these are the wider conquests of science, the loftier and more tranquil outlook upon things. We do not exaggerate in saying that to the average mind religion alone gives a sense of value to the person and his work, and a certain integrity to the whole of life,—which apart from this comprehensive faith, is nothing but several atoms and piecemeal happenings, loosely and artificially bound together by the stress of daily needs and the authority of the State. And government, once part and parcel of a free-man's privilege and duties as such, passes more and more into the hands of the expert. This is a statement which few would care to contest, yet it is in manifest contradiction to the complacent commonplaces with which the men of our day disguise their disappointment in the earlier hopes. Even in our own country, the active intervention of the people is limited to a vague approval once in five years of candidates whom they did not select, to the endorsement or rejection of some general policy, sketched for them in broad outline and concerned not with administration but with some moral principle or some secular interest. And this, at the most favourable estimate; for it seems probable that the case will not be fairly represented to the electorate,

and that the people, quite ready and able to decide on matters of right and wrong, or general expediency, will be cleverly diverted from the main issue by the dexterity of rival politicians. Elsewhere, matters promise worse; and it is impossible for a friend of the people to contemplate without anxiety the dangerous turn towards cynical indifference, which appears the only alternative to a profound ignorance. The world's society which handed over a contractual, and finally surrendered an absolute, authority to the Cæsarian head of the State,—suffered from a similar disease. The people and the nobles did not wish to administer or to fight. The municipal councils in the provinces had no real attachment to the petty and onerous duties of finance, police, and public works; and the age of the public benefactors came to an end with the Antonines.

Influx of barbarians; land and legions: division of payers and workers.

Gradually the imperial system, driven by irresistible pressure to fresh duties, assumed with reluctance the task of administering, and governed as well as reigned. It drew to itself (like the later barbarian monarchs) faithful servitors from every class but the highest, loyal soldiers from every race except the so-called predominant nation. And the two main needs of this colossal task were to defend and to provide adequate funds for defence. And these two duties should be specialised; as in later days, when cultivation and warfare were separated, the owner instead of guarding his homestead, commuted or compounded with an outside and independent system, which promised to undertake the task. With a similar tendency, and no doubt in the interest of the commonwealth at that time, the freeborn citizen had delegated to some central authority his right of private vengeance, of feud or of "vendetta": and the more enterprising and restless looked with anger and contempt on the successive surrenders of right by this craven troop to the central power; just as Nietzsche scoffs at the spiritless democracy of our time. Yet the people "love to have it so"; and

Influx of barbarians; land and legions: division of payers and workers.

against the ambition of irresponsible men of talent have welcomed the "Prince" of Machiavelli,—who appears as the Greek or Italian tyrant, as the Roman Cæsar, as the gallant soldier of fortune, who has before now righted the grievances of France and may be expected to do so again. Without conscious purpose or open display of principle at any given time, the empire divided its subjects into two classes: those who paid and those who worked; and if after the turmoil of the third century the increase of expert help implied additional expense, those who profited could scarcely complain. May we again recall the analogy of China under the present Manchu dynasty? To an inquirer about the abuses or corruption of this unique democratic government, an educated Chinese merchant answers, "Do we not then pay our Mandarins enough?"; best means of securing good government being not to intervene oneself, but to pay something above a mere "living wage" to a highly disciplined professional; and it might well be an exorbitant and fancy fee to the most notable expert. In the growth of the scientific conception of the universe and human society, the very first principles of government must be trodden under foot.

For with the settlement of all the higher moral questions,—the equality of man before the law, the abolition (in effect) of slavery, the raised status of women and the poor,—government naturally ceases to interest the loftier minds. Having no big issue, no Titanic duel of two popular heroes, to set before the electorate, the eagerness of the lowlier must evaporate as well. There are no fresh principles to discover; all that remains is the steady application of the old, vague, and already seriously criticised idealism. And then comes the awakening; science makes short work of the rights of man, and will only condescend to recognise the individual, as an interesting or submissive instance of a general rule. And then must come the government of the professional

adept: the Russian bureaucrat, the American placeman, Mr. Wells' "new republican," the modern French functionary,—indeed, a centralised absolutism under the empty forms of freedom. These, it is true, show different stages of the specialising process; which, instead of adding interest and intervention in public affairs to the function of the citizen, runs counter to the whole moral and idealist tendency of the nineteenth century by sharply dividing the official from the mass. The absurd infinality of the old distinctions of autocracy and republic is shown by this precisely similar development, similar agents, similar abuses; nor is it at all clear that wholesome public opinion is in any sense a peculiar advantage of the freer constitution.

Influx of barbarians; land and legions: division of payers and workers.

§ 5. But in Rome, where the people made no pretension to self-government, and only asked to be saved trouble, spoon-fed and delicately nurtured as they were, the power of officials increased as time wore on, the contrast between the taxpayer and collector deepened. And it was to keep the former at his task of ceaseless and unembarrassed payment that the lines between civil and military were so firmly drawn. It is quite possible that some local militias, suppressed in the interests of peace or economy, even some senators of Rome, fired with a spark of genuine lineage or tradition,—may have resented, when it was too late, peremptory prohibition; they had once sought such discharge as a privilege. It was essential for the costly system of defence that the paying class should be carefully maintained and artificially supported. Hence the tyranny over the *decurions;* hence the "prison-house" of the *curia,* whence the unhappy inheritor of ancestral land might not escape into the fresh air of the military class, or the safe asylum of the clerical profession. A general disinclination for effort and hazard, and therefore for the career of arms, set in early in Rome, after its gates were flung open to the dexterous Greek and the undesirable alien. It is impossible for us to

Society crystallises: rule of experts; admission of aliens to wield spear and spade.

Society crystallises: rule of experts; admission of aliens to wield spear and spade.

conceive the splendid comfort and magnificent spectacles which the poorest citizen could enjoy under the empire,—not merely in the greater centres, but even in the distant provincial towns; built after the Roman fashion, on the Scottish frontier, where the baths and porticoes seemed to the carping and irresolute critic, Tacitus, a mere engine of serfdom, not a serious sign of culture; or buried in the sand of the Sahara, melancholy evidence of the great African civilisation which, like that of Asia Minor, seemed to depend on Rome, and to have vanished with its genial influence. Nothing but compulsion could have drawn these pampered paupers from the cheap pleasures of the city to the dangers of a frontier campaign,—where "from the very tent-door fierce and hostile tribes can be descried";—nor indeed was the usefulness or good faith of these urban or "Cockney" levies very conspicuous. We are confident that some sentiments like the modern Chinese contempt for a soldier must have been secretly entertained under the so-called military despotism of Rome. Literary harangues by Hellenistic rhetoricians accustomed men to believe in the exclusively pacific mission of the empire; and encouraged a large public to confide implicitly in their stolid but honest guardians, and devote the time snatched from games and spectacles to the serious studies of style and grammar. It is a pathetic irony to remember that Marcus Aurelius, on whom "the ends of the world are come," was chided by Fronto for his love of philosophy and his neglect of rhetoric and the niceties of vocabulary and archaism. For him, Aurelius might have been turning a neat phrase, or hunting up an obsolete synonym of agreeable roughness for a jaded palate, when the barbarians had already gained admission, and the integrity of the empire and its Roman character had been for ever ruined.

But happily for later generations, there were never wanting notable successors of the old Roman worthies, who from time to time arose to revive a

dying tradition and invigorate a spirit almost extinct. But they stand more and more alone, and have to depend on alien help and foreign hands. Ancient Rome, says Ferrari with truth, was a society of military peasant farmers, acquiescing cheerfully in aristocratic government, not of merit, but of family. Both these characteristics had long since disappeared. The Roman citizen wielded neither spear nor spade. A uniform type of urban comfort spread through the civilised world, with its well-known results: a rapidly dwindling birth-rate and an alert but fragile population. The empire was unable to resist the suddenness of the Great Pestilence in the second century; there was no reserve-force, and no recruiting ground. Desolation spread in the rural districts; for the sole known remedy (even as late as Constantine V.) for filling the depleted capital was to transplant vigorous citizens from use to idleness. These ravages, either of barbarian raid or interior policy still more disastrous, were supplied, on soil or in legion, by foreigners. The third century sees a vast increase of settlers and of soldiers; and the military caste is reinforced either by barbarians or Roman citizens from the distant corner of Illyria. The issues of this policy (or rather this drift) we shall endeavour to analyse in a later section, when the results of this welcome come to be appraised. We may here be content with noting the fact that the most pronounced defiers of barbarian threats, the most convinced champions of the violated frontier, are also those who, in default of other sources, draw largely from these alien races as cultivators and defenders of Roman soil. We need not here discuss the wisdom of this design or necessity; we merely point out the inevitable division of the Roman world into peaceful and oppressed contributors to the exchequer (the *συντελεῖς* or *ὑποτελεῖς* of the historians); the military caste, which forms still an *imperium in imperio*, and represents more and more influences hostile to the old traditions of the empire; and again, the settlers of foreign birth

Society crystallises: rule of experts; admission of aliens to wield spear and spade.

Society crystallises: rule of experts; admission of aliens to wield spear and spade.

who took the place of a disappearing native populace, and supplied by their labour the idle voracity of the capital. Lastly, the bureaucracy of adroit and well-trained civilians, who endeavoured to control with unequal success the strong hand which had been summoned to protect the republic.

CHAPTER II

LEGITIMACY; OR, THE DYNASTIC EPOCH AND THE SUCCESSORS OF CONSTANTINE (337-457 A.D.)

FLAV. JUL. CONSTANTINUS II.	sons of C. I.	337-340	birth.
FLAV. JUL. CONSTANTIUS II.		337-361	birth.
FLAV. JUL. CONSTANS I.		337-350	birth.
MAGNENTIUS (Gaul)		350-353	milit. nom.
DECENTIUS (brother)		351-353	milit. nom.
VETRANIO		350	milit. nom.
NEPOTIANUS (in Rome)		350	milit. nom. birth.
SILVANUS (Gaul at Cologne)		355	milit. nom.
FLAV. CLAUDIUS JULIANUS IV. (cousin of Constance II.)		361-363	birth.
FLAV. JOVIANUS		363-364	milit. nom.

WEST			EAST		
FLAVIUS VALENTINIANUS I.	364-375	mil. nom.	FLAVIUS VALENS (bro.)	364-378	birth.
FLAVIUS GRATIANUS I. (son)	375 383	birth.	PROCOPIUS	365, 366	birth.
FLAVIUS VALENTINIANUS II. (brother)	375-392		FL. THEOD. I.	378-395	co-opt.
MAXIMUS III.	383-388	milit. nom.			
EUGENIUS	392-394	BARB. nom.			
FLAV. THEODOSIUS I.	394-395				
FLAV. HONORIUS	395 423	birth.	FLAV. ARCADIUS (son)	395-408	birth.
In Britain—					
MARCUS	405	mil. nom.			
GRATIANUS II.	406				
CONSTANTINUS III.	407-411				
CONSTANS II. (son)	409-411				
In Spain—					
MAXIMUS IV.	410	BARB. nom.			
At Mentz—					
JOVINUS (Gaul)	411				
SEBASTIANUS (bro.)	412				
PR. ATTALUS (in Rome)	409-410	BARB. nom.	FLAV. THEODOSIUS II. (son)	408-450	birth.
FLAV. CONSTANTIUS III. (bro.-in-law to Honor.)	421				
JOHANNES I.	423-425	BARB. nom.			
FLAV. PLAC. VALENTINIANUS III. (son of Const. III. and Placidia)	425-455	birth.	FLAV. MARCIANUS (husb. of Pulcheria)	450-457	FEMALE right.

Legitimacy and the imperial succession.

§ 1. It is my purpose in this chapter to review the government of Rome under the successors of Constantine, down to the extinction of the house of Theodosius and Valentinian in the West, the death of Pulcheria's husband, Marcian, in the East. In these years the system, organised by Diocletian and modified by Constantine, is allowed to work itself out. It may at once be said that the most striking feature is the triumph of the *hereditary* principle. Definitely banished for a time, this natural human prejudice revives, not merely in the parental fondness, but in the loyalty of the troops, in the approval of the subjects. And with this veneration for descent is closely allied the influence of females; and in consequence, the predominance of the palace chamberlain over the *civil* or *military* official, in the two jealous and strictly separated hierarchies of the new system. History almost everywhere shows us the same development. The needs of the State demand the tumultuary election of some able general; we would prefer to express in this manner the sudden elevations to supreme power, which are usually put down to the vain sallies of ambition, and thus to assert the *democratic* basis of sovereignty. Personal adroitness may count for much, as in the theatrical stroke by which Diocletian succeeded and avenged Numerian, and so changed the course of history; but the man can do nothing apart from the need of the hour. The family instinct will suggest to him that his own sons are fittest to succeed him, and the public verdict will ratify his choice; for the people cling with pathetic tenderness to the hereditary principle.

As I have often remarked, the imperial system turned out an amalgam of birthright and competitive election; and it must be confessed partook of the weakness of either system. The immediate offspring of a great man is often the most inefficient of the entire line; to justify heredity it is necessary to take a wider survey. The Romans fondly expected the same virtues to emerge in the son as had shone

in the father; and repeated failures of princes of the blood royal until the age of Diocletian made them impatient of any heir-apparent who did not fulfil early promise. All kinds of reasons were alleged to account for a very natural phenomenon—changelings, adultery, necromancy. The period of the early Cæsars is unusually sterile in the reigning houses. Only Britannicus is born in the purple; the successful competitor for the throne has not to dislodge a host of imperial cadets or even poor relations. The way to the palace is comparatively clear; and the tragedy of the succession is content with a single victim.

Legitimacy and the imperial succession.

Under the supremacy of frugality and the middle-class, during the last third of the first century (69–96), one son was good and one was bad; but the verdict of the story-books or folk-tales was reversed, which recognises merit only in the younger son. In the adoptive period a natural procedure, in a State which professed to revert in some measure to republican usage, was helped out by the prevailing sterility in high life. Commodus or Antoninus IV. appeared to a not very discerning populace to be a monster, a hybrid, or a mongrel. It seemed to them, innocent as they were of experience or Platonic lore, inconceivable that he could be the son of Marcus the philosopher. He was swept away, amid general approval or indifference; and within twenty years the Romans were again bewailing the enormities of another purple-born, who carried the same name and may be termed Antoninus V. The seventh and eighth were mere lads, and are better known as Diadumenus and Elagabalus,—both boasting descent from an actual or a deceased emperor. In the rough and tumble which followed the death of Alexander (235–285), the rapid and gory series did not allow the principle of heredity a fair trial. These simpler Cæsars, barbarian or Pannonian soldiers, men of pure lives and such ordinary family attachment as a camp-life could permit, associated their sons in

Legitimacy and the imperial succession.

their brief administration. Maximin, Gordian, Philip, Decius, Gallus, Valerian, Carus,—all had sons in partnership, doomed to the same speedy fate. None but Gallienus (253–268) had any chance of retrieving the bad repute of the "heir-apparent"; and though a more favourable estimate of his character is recommended in these pages, the common verdict sees in him a typical argument against heredity. Still, in the case of Elagabalus and of Gordian III., we see a kind of soldiers' chivalry towards a young and handsome scion of an imperial family,—a partiality on which Senate and army were in absolute opposition, as on most other points. It is curious to contrast the cries of the Senate in the third period, "No more youths born in the purple," with the shouts of the people at Constantinople, "No more old men with forked beards,"—some nine centuries later on the dethronement of Andronicus Comnenus (1185). Twice the brothers of Claudius II. and of Tacitus made the most of a shadowy fraternal claim, which was promptly ruled out of court; the amiable Quintillus and Florian were the victims of the strange silence or inconsistency of the system on one essential point,—surely the most important and cardinal point of all.

Direct lines in West; hereditary later in East.

§ 2. But these "transient and embarrassed phantoms" passed by without impressing any conscious purpose on the State,—*fatis Imperii urgentibus*. Only with Diocletian was there given leisure and breathing-space to take serious account of the republic and its assets. He is represented as banishing this lineal or dynastic principle of set design; and yet his quadripartite college of emperors is in some sense a family alliance, and, at least at the outset, depends upon marriage. It was a compromise; the son, often the worst legacy of a good father, must give place to the son-in-law. Nature and Reason might here be said to ally—the Nature which blindly produces, the Reason which calmly chooses the best adoptive son; and like all compromises the system failed. Once more the "fork" of paper-charters,

constitutions, legal obligations, was powerless against a natural prejudice. Constantine is what he is, largely because he had the training and opportunities of his father's son; and after he had removed Licinius from his path, he overthrew the well-planned but impracticable scheme of Diocletian. He reigned as sole sovereign some fourteen years and left a divided empire to his children, partitioned out like a patrimonial estate.

Direct lines in West; hereditary later in East.

How large a portion of this fourth century passes under the nominal or effective sway of princes who were either born in the purple, or could remember no other surroundings than the etiquette of the palace, the reflected glory of an heir-apparent! Constantius II. was the third of his line, and Julian IV. was the fourth; Gratian and Valentinian II., after the ten years' interval of their father (a parvenu who reinforces the imperial series by a new strain), are typical representatives of hereditary kingship, called perhaps immaturely to an exceptional responsibility. The former marries the posthumous daughter of the son of Constantine, but leaves no issue; the latter is the son of Justina, the widow of Magnentius, sometime emperor in Gaul. From 305–363 the sovereignty was in the hands of a recognised "first family," and during the greater part, the ruler had never remembered a "private lot" (*nunquam sortem privatam experti*). The years 375–392 fell under the sway of the two stripling sons of Valentinian I.; and Theodosius is the nominee of Gratian and the husband of his half-sister, Galla. Both in East and West, on a new partition of the realm, minors occupied the throne at the close of the century; the new house rested mainly, no doubt, on the prowess of its Spanish founder, but it might claim some enhanced dignity also in its alliance with the Pannonian line, in the union of Theodosius with Galla. And the second quarter of the next century rests with the latter; for with Placidia remains the real power from 425–450, and in her son expires (455) the last genuine emperor of

Direct lines in West; hereditary later in East.

the West. Thus sons of emperors in the direct line account, in the West, for just half of the fourth century (337–363, 375–392, 395–400) and for the full moiety of the fifth (400–455). In the East, matters throughout this period were somewhat different. There was not the same emphasis on the "dynastic" principle; or if such emphasis was laid it was extremely unfortunate. Gallus, the Eastern Cæsar, had not been an encouraging instance of an imperial cadet; Valens (364–378) was a *novus homo*, and neither forgot the circumstance himself nor allowed others to forget it. He had not the prestige of a throne successfully won, nor the dignity of a crown tranquilly transmitted. And hence the anxious suspicions of others' merit, the well-founded diffidence of his own, which made the rule of this conscientious and untiring prince a veritable reign of terror. Theodosius I. is a son of one of his victims, the brave conqueror of the African revolt under Firmus, and a worthy precursor of the excellent Boniface in the fifth century, and of Solomon in the sixth. When Gratian atoned in some degree for his father's murder by elevating him into full partnership with a noble confidence, Theodosius deserved his promotion as his father's son and as a capable general. But he is the first of his line, and it is not until the reigns of Arcadius and Theodosius II. that the East falls under hereditary sway (395–408, 408–450). And here we once again see the curious unlikeness of great men's sons to their parents; the warrior, pushed forward by popular approval that is never wholly flattery or an accident, leaves behind the respectable, well-nurtured offspring of an orderly but luxurious palace-life. Some paltry suspicions attach to the moral life of Constans I. (337–350); but until Valentinian III. (the Athalaric of the decaying empire) not a syllable is breathed against the high personal character of the sovereigns; an austere and decorous chastity reigns in the palaces of Ravenna and Byzantium, and the lives of Pulcheria and of Placidia are as edifying as the

biographies of the saints. Piety, humanity, modesty of manners and deportment, are to be marked in these Eastern Cæsars, whose throne is never threatened by pretender for more than half a century, whose will is never thwarted merely because it has never been exerted.

Direct lines in West; hereditary later in East.

Thus we may complete our comparison and our picture, by pointing out a slight contrast between the Eastern and the Western realm. The former was not so habituated to "dynastic" obedience, though after the accession of Arcadius the instinct or prejudice in favour of a peaceful succession took even stronger hold. On the death of the pious hunter and calligraphist, Theodosius II., his sister devolved the empire upon Marcian (450–457); and it is an interesting problem whether the subsequent reaction towards an elective or adoptive method, in favour of mature State-servants of tried merit,—was in any sense an intentional reversal of the family or patrimonial system. It is at least a significant accident that from 450 to the death of Heraclius I. (641) no son is called to succeed his father, except the infant Leo II. The highest place may seem struck with barrenness; or more probably, if we remember the numerous and ill-fated progeny of Maurice, only grave and isolated seniors without encumbrance are chosen—certain it is that the annals of Byzantium from 457 to the great upheaval in 602 reveal a kind of papal nepotism in the nephews of Anastasius, of Justin, and of Justinian; or a curious recognition, so common in mediæval Europe, of right descending through the female line, or conferred actually by wedlock with an heiress. It may be interesting, and possibly instructive, to point out in this period the singular absence of direct succession in the male line; but we cannot, in the dearth of genuine scientific knowledge, build any theory upon it. At any rate, it is the sole duty of the historian to point out such facts, and to leave his readers to form conjecture or hypothesis at will. The future of the great Byzantine monarchy will rest with the dynasties.

Direct lines in West; hereditary later in East.

The isolated champion, the momentary "man of the hour" or "saviour of society," tends always to appear less frequently, and the whole tone and principle of the empire, half-republican and civil, half-despotic and military, will be reversed and annihilated at last by the Comnenian family. For the house of Alexius is neither Roman nor Byzantine; it is Greek, and already mediæval.

Empire never acquiesced for long in the promotion of untried youth.

§ 3. But the epoch of which we write is the palmy period for the heir-apparent and his uncontested succession; and having established this, we must now inquire into the probable features and special character of such a government. It is superfluous to repeat here that the subtle, indistinct, and durable constitution of Augustus never contemplated anything of the sort. The empire started indeed not with the blunt dictatorship of Julius, but with the "pious" duty of a youth of eighteen to wreak vengeance on a parent's murderers. But the scheme as it left the grasp of the septuagenarian at Nola was an office, a supreme magistracy, or congeries of offices, and had nothing to do with family or patrimony. Human nature is stronger than republican sentiment: for indeed of all governments, a republic is that which is least conformable to human nature, least intelligible to the average man; is the work of a calculating and purposive reason, and not the spontaneous growth of years or the free development of national characteristics. And democracy (if it indeed be anything more than a euphemism for a Whig camarilla or a Venetian oligarchy) seems signally disinclined to dispense with the family, or regard with envy the recognised supremacy of a dynasty which is usually foreign. In Rome in the first century, the vague yet powerful current of the popular influence set undoubtedly in favour of the members of a certain reigning house, the *regnatrix domus* of Tacitus. Thus early do we find applied in bitter irony a title familiar enough to us in these so-called democratic days; for the hard-and-fast distinction between the royal line and the

subject class (unknown to antiquity) is a real guarantee of peace and freedom. No personal sanctity could attach to the emperor in Rome, except as a representative of the majesty of the people. He was the executive; the hand that guided or smote. It was plainly an anomaly when Caius and Nero, who had never served in the field or advised in the Senate, were invested with the supreme power. The emperors of the "year of tumult" were able generals and administrators; only with the third member of the Flavian house was a youthful novice elevated above the greybeards of the Senate,—owing to the dim but cogent sense of hereditary right. Once more, with Verus or Antoninus III., was youth set above experience; and with the caprice or playful chivalry of the camp, the star-like Diadumenus, the handsome bastard of Caracalla, the dutiful Alexander, the youthful but serious Gordian, were clothed with the purple, that implied not a princely dignity but the hard work of a responsible and elective office. The imperial system demanded personal government; and to the end of the chapter the sole complaint of the critic or the historian is that the emperor does not reign enough, not that his absolutism is unlimited. The popular origin of this revived monarchy was never forgotten; and the sole remedy against an inefficient Cæsar was to elect one who would do his own work and not leave it to subordinates. If we examine without bias the records of the empire, we should find this close alliance between the throne and the people, unbroken. Both were, sometimes perhaps unconsciously, in full harmony of aim; both were Liberals and Imperialists; both regarded with the same jealous distrust the proud senatorial families, which either wasted their time in idle and arrogant leisure, or seized on office not as a public duty, but as a means of gain,—or possibly, the stepping-stone to a "tyranny." It was clear that this vigilant supervision of a suspected governing class could not be exerted by a lad of ten or even fourteen years. The

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revolt of Maximin had its deepest cause in the dislike of civilians and of female influence; in a contempt for a youth who had been the darling of the troops as a boy, but who had never been permitted to become a man. After a brief reaction, when the senatorial candidates, Balbinus and Maximus II., were slain in their abortive essay to revive the consulate, Gordian III., still under tutors and governors, gives way to Philip; and in the forty years that followed, no minor reigns without a colleague. The emperor directly administers or guards the frontier, and the distrusted intermediaries vanish into insignificance. Carus on the Persian frontier, bald and roughly dressed, is found by the Persian envoys, eating the supper of an ordinary soldier. It must be confessed that sanguinary and violent as are the annals of this turmoil and military anarchy, it is wanting in some of the defects of that purely civilian government which the last members of the house of Severus strove to set up. The times were not ready for the rule of queens-regent and barristers. Indeed, the meridian of the empire no longer passed through Rome; and the work demanded from the ruler was not the affable, business-like accessibility of a young prince, but the straightforward and, if need be, severe court-martial of a soldier. Now it is clear that the changes instituted by the reforms of the fourth century, in the direction of the awful and invisible seclusion and ignorance of the sovereign, were harmless to their inventors, but highly mischievous to their successors. The Pannonian soldiers, who restored the empire, from Aurelian (270–275) to Constantine (306–337) adopted of set policy a pompous demeanour and multiplied, not we may imagine without a secret smile or sigh, the number of court functionaries, the preliminaries of an audience. Constantius III. (421–422) was probably not the only successor of Diocletian, in Old or New Rome, who felt the irksome restraint of imperial etiquette,—thought out in strange irony by a Dacian peasant and elaborated by Greek chamber-

lains. For the first time in Roman history, a palace cabal or camarilla became possible. The emperor, safely guarded from public gaze, saw and heard only with the eyes and ears of those whose chief aim was to preserve his inviolable ignorance. The dignity of emperor, paramount though it was, was to the last degree precarious; but the ring of interested officials who surrounded him was in a large measure permanent. We are tempted perhaps as we chronicle the orderly annals of the house of Constantine or of Theodosius, and the decent sequence of scions of an imperial family,—to attribute a sense of security and assurance to the wearers of the purple, which is inseparable no doubt from the mental equipment of a modern dynast. We are even unfair enough to rebuke the needless alarms and cruelty of a Constantius or a Valens, when they might have known the firm basis of their power, and have foreseen the speedy doom of any usurper. Such confidence, it is needless to say, was never felt (even if it might be displayed) by the uneasy nominee of the staff-corps or the palace-clique. The revolt of Magnentius or of Procopius was a serious menace not merely to the person of the reigning monarch but to the integrity of the empire. The sole aim, indeed the highest ideal of these Cæsars, was to preserve the unity of the realm. For this, Theodosius temporises with Maximus III. (383–388); for this, Honorius (395–423) vanquishes his pride and sends the habiliments of empire to the upstart Constantine III. (407–411), who has as much right to claim a place in the Cæsarian line as the dour and furtive Pannonian Constantius III., who provided the West with its last "legitimate" ruler.

Empire never acquiesced for long in the promotion of untried youth.

§ 4. In the great world of officials, there was no vestige of the modern, I may almost say Teutonic, sense of personal loyalty, and there was but little trace of personal honour. The later barbarian kings burst into Roman territory, accompanied by a trusty band of retainers who gradually supplanted the nobles of long descent; forming, as later feudalism shows,

Prompt and personal function of prince; as general representative.

Prompt and personal function of prince; as general representative.

an uncomfortable counterpoise to royal authority. The emperors, deterred in the allotment of public office by senatorial sullenness or incapacity, sought their agents elsewhere, and especially in their own household. The influence of freedmen, conspicuous under Claudius or Domitian, must have been very genuine. Historians love to contrast the generous pride of the Roman aristocrat who could not take office under an upstart, or who chafed at the restraints of a central assessor upon provincial malversation. With a show of humility, they point to the low estate of the modern noble, who deems himself honoured, while he is in fact degraded, by the menial and household offices at court, which supply his highest title. Yet to a tranquil observer many of the difficulties of the administration were due to this idle vanity, which would not brook control or the recognition of a master. Indeed, it is directly responsible for the prevalent palace-administration, which everywhere in theory, and largely also in practice, has superseded the diffused and co-ordinate regimen of a decentralised State. The emperors were driven, in their honest care for the public welfare, to select trustworthy agents; and the meaning of the "military despotism," a title of reproach so often applied maliciously to the Roman Empire, is merely this:—an order was given and promptly obeyed without cavil; "and to my servant, do this and he doeth it"; Sallustius' advice to Tiberius at the uneasy opening of his reign in Nola.

Now the entire machinery of the republic was almost of design calculated to arrest this promptness and unquestioning obedience; the various duties of a State-executive were wrested from a single hand and parted out among a number of equal and, in effect, irresponsible officials, whose negative duty was rather to check a colleague's enterprise than assist his zeal for reform. There was a vast expenditure of heat and friction to secure equilibrium; and the Roman senator sent out to a province with regal powers abused his freedom and impunity, in a very natural

reaction. And, as we know, it was this reaction that carried the armed proconsul at the head of a faithful army into the defenceless capital of the world. Centralisation (whether we regret or approve) is the inevitable climax in the development of organised society; and if the emperor sought among the lowly and unscrupulous for his immediate executive, it was rather the fault of those who could not stoop to relieve him of a portion of his responsibility. The whole imperial system is a denial of senatorial, Roman, Italian privilege: in a word, it is a provincial protest against a Whig oligarchy,—the emperor was a "patriot king," not indeed of the narrower Rome, but of that larger State, which was conterminous with the world, "*urbem* fecisti quod prius *orbis* erat." It was in the very middle of the Adoptive period that the scattered elements of this unrecognised or personal retinue were gathered into some semblance of a civil service. There was no crafty or studied encroachment of central power; but through no fault of the prince, even against his will, the direct reference of a helpless world to a master had become the rule. Pliny's correspondence will be proof enough of the host of new and minute duties which pressed upon Cæsar. Nothing, it would appear, could be settled without him, "*Ea sola species adulandi supererat.*" It cannot be doubtful to any unbiassed student of history that this confidence was both genuine and deserved. We have perhaps happily ended that epoch of criticism which traced all human institutions to hypocrisy and guile; saw in the willing obedience of the subject only the cringing humility of the slave; and detected in the endless and artificial broils of a narrow and malicious city-life or the perpetual feuds of savages, the ideal of human existence. The worship of the imperial genius was a sincere if misplaced token of gratitude for a peace and a justice hitherto unknown. From the first, the immediate agent of Cæsar had better credentials than the nominee of the Senate; "*Onera deprecantes levari placuit proconsulari imperio,*"

Prompt and personal function of prince; as general representative.

Prompt and personal function of prince; as general representative.

writes Tacitus of Achaia and Macedonia. Who can doubt that the immense Balkan peninsula was the gainer by the indefinite prorogation of Poppæus Sabinus' command under Tiberius?—or that the easiest way to satisfy the remonstrance of the provincials was to diminish the number of semi-independent governors and unite under a single "servant of the crown," well-qualified and tried in office, but at any given moment responsible to a vigilant master? The great tragedy of the reign of this second emperor was largely due to the unreceptive "old bottles" of misrule, of which Piso, the Syrian proconsul, was a typical representative.

Growing insubordination of agents: autocracy limited by its recognition.

§ 5. The civil service, which thus of necessity grew up to perform the humbler or more delicate duties of an ever more engrossing task, became in its turn the "Frankenstein monster" to its creator. Roman society (indeed all primitive society) had been founded upon the affectionate relations of high and low, the *patronus* and the *cliens*. By this device they atoned for the narrowness of State interference and found a salve for the jealous division of classes both in place and in sentiment, which civilisation seems to increase rather than to alleviate. And in this spirit the "intendants" of the Roman Empire began their work. But the dizzy succession of meteor-like princes during the Great Anarchy (235-285) effectively quenched the personal allegiance. Devotion to an abstraction was substituted,—to an Ideal which clothed itself in a variety of individuals and soon tired of these imperfect representatives. It is conceivable that the inmost provinces during that time enjoyed comparative peace, but were ignorant of the name and features of the reigning Cæsar;—with whom indeed only the most patient of historians can keep pace. The abstraction Rome, or the Roman Republic, exerted a far greater influence on the world at large than the personal character of the sovereign. The great machine went on, even although for a time it was headless.

Growing insubordination of agents: autocracy limited by its recognition.

The first duty, as we have so often remarked, of any absolute government is to discover a remedy against its abuse, or a temporary exercise of power during an interregnum. When the political theorist is satisfied that he has put his finger on the "seat of sovereignty," he has nearly always discovered a *caput mortuum*. To say that the people have the power, is to utter a truism or a fallacy; and of either sense the present age has grown heartily tired. To say that an autocrat exercises absolute authority is to say nothing at all. Absolute monarchy and democracy are convenient formulas; they are not facts; and the man of sense instead of gazing awestruck at imposing phantoms will inquire, "Granting your formula, which does not matter to me, where does the effective control reside?" And in nearly every State, reactionary or progressive, it will be found *elsewhere* than in the admitted and recognised channels of authority. For nearly all influence is indirect, and to proclaim publicly the irresponsible prerogative of king or people is to rob it of half its power, and to turn men's thoughts to other quarters for the discovery and maintenance of social order. Now the safeguard against the madness or incapacity of a despotic crown lies in the removal of its temporary representative, who only enjoys its honours during good behaviour. Roman public opinion was merciless towards a Cæsar who had failed, or proved unworthy of high office. Their code of proportionate criminality is as strange to us to-day as any barbarian *wehr-geld*. The manly pursuits of Gratian (375-383) were as fatal to his popularity as the cruelty which accompanied the same dexterity in Commodus (180-192), just two hundred years earlier. There is more than mere irony or exaggerated satire in the excuse of Juvenal for Orestes, "*Troica non scripsit*"; it was the artistic tastes of Nero that hurried him to a doom which his State-crimes would not have exacted. Roman literature is haunted by this hyperbole, this entire want of perspective, the fatal legacy of the

Growing insubordination of agents: autocracy limited by its recognition.

Stoic school; recognising no limit or degree in good or evil, and in consequence never finding in this mixed world either the perfect sage or consummate wickedness. In the indictment of an emperor, the last and most damning charge is nearly always some amiable trait, some redeeming characteristic that to our eyes at least makes the sinister figure almost human.—But to return: the Roman emperor held his place "during pleasure" like any other official, and accepted its tenure on these conditions. There is not a trace of "right divine to govern wrong" until we observe Christian influences at work; until power is a trust from above and not an office delegated from below. The immediate retinue of the transient sovereign saw through the weakness of the representative to the eternity of the system. Who has not smiled at the French courtiers, bowing low to the chair of state and jostling indifferently past King Lewis himself? yet beneath this inconsistency lies a great truth; which no one saw more clearly than the much maligned Tiberius: "*Principes mortales, Rempublicam æternam esse.*"

The permanent official: duel of nominal and actual ruler.

§ 6. The civil service or the army, with its regular grades and orderly rules of promotion, has the start of any monarch, even with the best intentions, bent on reform. When in a vacancy or a minority the central authority was in abeyance, the staff-corps or the body of household troops or chamberlains would become charged not only with ordinary business, but with the old patrician privilege of devolving the succession. In a certain sense, the imperial records from Constantine I. to Majorianus (457–461) tell of nothing so much as a long struggle between the supposed sovereign and his ministers, between the nominal and the actual wielders of power. We shall find later that the whole crisis in the years 565–602 is due to the unavailing fight of sovereigns, wanting neither in tact nor ability, against license and privilege in high places. Sometimes the foe will be an unofficial class of wealthy and irresponsible citizens; sometimes the

subordinate agents in the provinces; sometimes the unscrupulous servants of a monarch's intimacy,—the eunuchs, who become a necessity in a court when once the principle of royal and unapproachable seclusion is recognised as chief among the *arcana imperii*. An absolute monarch is frequently tempted to exclaim with Nicholas II. in our own times, "Will no one tell me the truth?" Among the most valuable and convincing documents of history lies the speech of Justinus II. (578), when he warns his successor in simple, even broken utterance, against the wiles of the palace-clique. This unequal contest by no means exhausts the interesting crises of this period; but it may pass unnoticed, because so much is matter of surmise rather than of express record. The palatines share their power with the more honest chiefs of the army-corps, and in fact during this century and a half a vacant throne is filled by military suffrages; and in the unique apparent exception, Joannes the *primicerius notariorum* (423–425), who figures as the nominee of a palace intrigue, we may suspect with reason the influence of Castinus, the "master of troops," and the reluctance of one who grasped at the substance of power, to cumber himself with its trappings. So Arbogast, so Gerontius, so Orestes, propose other heads than their own to wear the diadem and endure the ceremony in the obscurity of a palace. But while in this age of Constantine, Valentinian, and Theodosius, the military is very distinctly the final arbiter, the bestower of power, it must be remembered that such intervention is exceptional;—that everyday matters in the still extensive field of civil, social, fiscal, and judicial activity lie outside (or perhaps above or below) the range of a soldier's interest. "*Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit.*" The real government, concerned with details and routine, is the work of the obscure official. It takes its tone, its spirit and its principles, from this potent but half-unrecognised hierarchy. And while it is easy to trace the career, and estimate the influence of some able

The permanent official: duel of nominal and actual ruler.

The permanent official: duel of nominal and actual ruler.

general, of Theodosius the elder, of Stilico, of Aëtius, or of Boniface;—or the change of policy, the active enmity or open partnership of Alaric or Ataulphus;—we often find ourselves at a loss in essaying to appreciate the character, the motives, the policy of Eusebius, Chrysaphius, Ruffinus, Eutropius, Olympius, and Jovius. And again, what shall we say of those supreme instruments of imperial justice, or engines of imperial confiscation, the pretorian prefects, divested of their military power, but in the civil sphere the *alter ego* of the sovereign and the veritable dispenser of his awards? To a more careful diagnosis of these agents a special section should be given; it is now high time to pass on to other aspects of the empire during the Dynastic Period.

Mutinies of Dynastic era: seclusion of sovereign: influence of chamberlains and 'Shogun.'

§ 7. It must not be supposed that a single family, by right of election in great measure accidental, was permitted to enjoy this unique position without question. The precedent of the third century was too fresh in men's mind, when the *imperium* was a prize within the reach of any bold adventurer. But in justice to the dynastic principle in this first Christian century, the supreme place was never the aim of mere vulgar ambition and greed, never a mere family appanage, the means of enriching needy relatives. Such it became in the age which follows the close of this historical study,—the age of the Comneni. There still survives something of the old Roman spirit of disinterested public service, which ennobles the individual citizen, and merges his personality and caprice in duty to the State. Office is still a sacred trust, not a patrimony; behind the emperor of the moment was the republic. It was therefore with no passionate indignation against dynastic claims that the usurpers of this period set up their banners against the "legitimate" sovereigns. Constantius II. (as Ammian repeats with irksome iteration) was uniformly successful in *civil* war and in quelling *domestic* disturbance. Pretenders were rife in the West; Magnentius murders Constans I.

(337–350) and heads a barbarian, perhaps a nationalist rising; Nepotianus seeks to revive in the peaceful capital the days of Maxentius; Vetranio in the general confusion and uncertainty assumes the purple; Silvanus is tempted by the malicious intrigues of courtiers to try this last desperate means of reaching safety. But the interest of these military "pronunciamentos" was confined to the armies and generals in question; and the discredit brought by Gallus on the Constantian house was amply retrieved by the Gallic laurels of his brother Julian. Stern necessity drove the staff-corps to a hasty and very possibly erroneous choice on the banks of the Tigris in 363; every one would be first to salute the new emperor, and no one could venture to rectify a mistake by inquiring if this was really the *Jovianus* intended? So too with the elevation of Valentinian I.: necessity and the peril of anarchy could not stop to consider precedents or weigh merits. No one was more conscious of his shortcomings than Valens himself; and it caused little surprise that Procopius, a cousin of Julian, maintained himself for some months in the years 365, 366, as emperor at Constantinople. It does not appear that this seizure of the capital threw the general administration out of gear, any more than a similar revolution at the beginning of Constantine V.'s reign, when Artavasdus usurped power (740–743). But the results of the daring of this "pale phantom" (as Ammian suggests) were terrible indeed. Henceforth, the slow and suspicious mind of Valens was open to informers; and from the Gothic alliance with the baffled pretender, on the score of "hereditary claims" and legitimacy, sprang the distrust of the Eastern court, which dared not refuse the suppliants at the Danube in 376, 377; yet gave them only a half-hearted welcome. The disaster of Adrianople was the dying curse of Procopius.—So completely was the choice of a new sovereign the perquisite of the staff-corps, that during the illness of Valentinian I. in the West,

Mutinies of Dynastic era seclusion of sovereign: influence of chamberlains and 'Shogun.'

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his successor is already seriously debated in military conclave; and no thought is given to the problematic rights of his children to the reversion. On his recovery, the wise sovereign loses no time in presenting Gratian to the troops and securing their approval of a father's partiality. Maximus III. (383–388) voices the public murmurs against Gratian's alien bodyguard and barbarising proclivity; just as Arbogast is the first of a series of barbarian "protectors," leading about a tame Augustus, not venturing, or perhaps scorning, to assume the purple which they were ready enough to bestow. Eugenius, the pagan rhetorician, is the precursor of Attalus, the artistic Ionian whom the Senate sends out to treat with Alaric; of Jovinus, the "client" of the Burgundians (and for a brief space of Ataulphus also), of Avitus, of Libius Severus IV., and of Ricimer's pageant-emperors, down to the extinction of the line in Romulus. This is the significance of the events of 392, 393, and the great battle of the Frigidus. Historians remind us that it is the first time in this later empire that East vanquishes West; hitherto the balance of success has been uniformly with the latter. But it is for our present purpose mainly instructive as being the earliest protest of a proud barbarian minister-of-war against the fancied independence of a purple-born stripling; the last ineffective protest in the West against a Christian government (unless we except the dalliance with Sibylline books and Etruscan soothsayers during the siege of Rome). The last pretender of our list seems at first sight to belong to a very different class: Joannes, chief of the notaries, *spectabilis* not *illustris*, seems elevated by a peaceful civilian intrigue; yet as we have seen above, it is more than probable that pure military influence was in reserve. Now a survey of such facts will lead us to this conclusion: that the reign of immature and secluded youths largely contributed to the establishment of a barbarian protectorate in the West; and it was just

Mutinies of Dynastic era: seclusion of sovereign: influence of chamberlains and 'Shogun.'

a question whether the ascendancy lay with the functionaries who thronged the sacred halls, or the barbarians who bivouacked outside. The problem which has to be settled in the next period is, "Shall the empire accept side by side with a secluded nominal ruler an effective barbarian 'Shogun'?" It is now time to consider what part is being played in the governments of East and West by this new element; and we are called upon to explain why the Western Cæsar vanishes until 800; why the crime of Leo I. in the murder of Ardaburius marks for the East a new era of independence.

CHAPTER III

LIBERAL IMPERIALISM; OR, THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EMPEROR AND THE PROFFER OF BARBARIAN LOYALTY

Unvarying 'Liberalism' of Monarchy: modern 'triumphs of liberty' the success of a faction.

§ 1. RESTRICTION, exclusion, and privilege—such were the chief maxims of the city-state, when kinship, genuine or fictitious, constituted the sole tie. But an empire stands for expansion and liberalism; its very existence implies that efficiency and defensive cohesion have superseded as end or motive power, the mere aimless cohabitation of relatives. It is not without reason that feudalism distrusts the purpose and essays to thwart the methods of sovereignty; for it is largely a reaction to that more primitive society, which takes form in the clan, the tribe, or the city-state. The noble has a well-justified suspicion of a monarch, who from his very position is no "respecter of persons." The chief ruler, with his selfish interests and enterprise merged in the general welfare, is commonly identified with the party of progress and enlightenment. In the very nature of the case, a sovereign before whom all are equal, is a well-qualified and impartial representative of the whole mass. Indeed, he is coerced against his will into this unconscious position of champion of popular rights. The new reading of the old feudal or parliamentary struggles brings into clear relief the popular basis of monarchy, as the enemy of privilege and exemption. Magna Charta, the Great Rebellion, the Revolution, in our own history,—represent to us to-day certain successful efforts of a solid minority in the State to usurp control and win exclusive benefits. That under Providence good

results have ensued does not exonerate the prime-movers from selfish and reactionary aim; an aim none the less selfish because united with perfect good faith. It is the pardonable self-delusion of small but convinced minorities who often meet in discussion and arrive at idealist conclusion, to confuse their own advantage or views with the common good. In the past, it is a commonplace which as a truism is often forgotten, that a single rule is the only obstacle to the endless jealousy and recrimination of classes, or the still more odious rancour of religious and national bitterness. While the kings of England strove to unite a people and make justice uniform, a powerful minority fought for special privileges; which through no effort of theirs were destined to become the common heritage of all in the fulness of time. A democratic plebiscite or referendum (which so far as the will of the people can be elicited seems the only convincing method) would have nullified the demands of the barons, the overthrow of the Catholic Church, the deposition of the Stuarts, the supremacy of the Venetian oligarchy through the eighteenth century under cover of popular government.

Unvarying 'Liberalism' of Monarchy: modern 'triumphs of liberty the success of a faction.

And indeed, the Roman Empire as we interpret it to-day, so far from being a retrograde movement, was a distinct advance,—upon which few modern constitutions can be said to make any substantial improvement. It was a reaction of the provinces against the metropolis; such as might well take place once more between the colonies of the British Empire and Downing Street. It would be idle and vain to assert that the chief heroes in this drama of transition played their part with eyes open and fully conscious purpose. Such a theory seriously impairs the entire work of Theodor Mommsen, the first careful, untiring student to suggest a more equitable judgment on the imperial aims. His picture of Cæsar, singularly untrue to experience and the possibilities of human nature, merely to-day provokes wildest

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reaction in the opposite direction; the clear-sighted and consummate statesman, who looked steadfastly at an outlined plan of preconceived architecture like a Platonist, becomes for Guglielmo Ferrari the arch-opportunist, always embarrassed by his unexpected success; the founder of the line of Cæsars and Kaisers and Tzars of all time is merely for him the arch-destroyer. Neither account is true; Cæsar is neither the tranquil guide of events towards a predestined goal, nor the worried creature of circumstances. But he represented the larger interests and the wider suffrage, the more spacious opportunity. His curious breach with ceremony and tradition, his neglect of precedent and of prejudice,—taught his followers a much needed lesson. The success of Augustus was due to the clever disguise of Liberalism in the garb of religious and national patriotism. Only tentatively did he proceed in throwing open the world to an impartial administration,—this cautious nephew of the Dictator who made Gauls senators and granted the franchise wholesale. With moderate steps did the great movement advance towards the breaking down of racial barriers; and with a wisdom rarely shown in these days of logical contrasts, it fostered a measure of genuine autonomy and local interest, while retaining an effective but limited supervision and right of interference; it did not hurry, as if only capable of superlatives, from one extreme of centralised control to complete independence.

Wise and gradual liberalism of early empire; anti-aristocratic, anti-national: necessary appeal to force and interest.

§ 2. The emperors were almost uniformly abreast of the time. Law, religion, public opinion, Stoic philosophy (in its finer aspect), combined to shake the fetters of privilege, to display the natural equality and likeness of man as man. It was reserved for a strange wearer of the title Antonine (212) to register or endorse this revolution, by an edict as notable and theatrical as Alexander II.'s ukase of emancipation. Rome ceased some years later to be the centre of gravity, and the last vestige of Italian superiority was swept away by Diocletian. The problem was no

longer the supervision of civil magistrates in the unarmed provinces along the Mediterranean, but the defence of the frontier. The ablest defenders are the most doubtful in lineage: Maximinus I. (235–238), a barbarian, performs valiant service in keeping his countrymen out; Publius Licinius Gallienus (253–268) does his best to let them in.

Wise and gradual liberalism of early empire; anti-aristocratic, anti-national: necessary appeal to force and interest.

The new converts to Roman allegiance are more royalist than the king, more nationalist than the nation.—Again and again the empire retreated to the ancient limits marked out by Augustus, and resumed its defensive attitude. What at such times was to be the policy towards those who knocked at the gates as suppliants or as marauders? Was the process of expansion to be indefinitely applied in the matter, not indeed of new territory, but of new settlers? The imperial idea was of course supra-national not anti-national; it did not destroy a country, but it gave an additional fatherland and a new pride of citizenship. There was nothing untoward in the settlement of barbarian tribes in depleted districts; and it is difficult for us to-day to appreciate the ravages which the plagues of the second and third century had made in over-populous regions. Extensive solitudes took the place of busy countrysides and thriving towns. The *latifundia*, by the accumulation of vast estates in single hands, had been the creation rather of necessity and obdurate physical law than of any deliberate greed. Once again the empire had taught men to live at peace with each other; for the gathering at Ephesus in the Acts the town-clerk feared an inquiry only on the ground of uproar; Dio Chrysostom's pages are full of references to the small jealousies and petty spites which only a good-humoured central authority, embodied in such men as Gallio, could hold in check. And during the long repose which followed the reconstitution of the empire under Vespasian (70–180), the interior provinces, unaccustomed even to the sight of soldier or the glitter of steel, unlearnt the

Wise and gradual liberalism of early empire; anti-aristocratic, anti-national: necessary appeal to force and interest.

art of defence. As we shall often remark, careful study must relieve the imperial line of the charge of needless intervention and tutelage. The multiplication of imperial duties and, as we saw, of direct imperial agents, was an inevitable effect or resultant of various causes; in which intentional interference played perhaps the smallest part. It is not to the discredit of the system, if it happened, that amid the financial or civil embarrassment of the network of city-states, even the worst of the emperors was trusted above every one else, as an equitable and impartial referee;—if the control of arms (whatever this might entail) was confidently surrendered to a single arbiter, and no further thought was given to national defence or the problem of conscription. The triumphant campaigns of Trajan (98–117), the adroit royal progresses of Hadrian (117–138), lulled the world into a false security. Henceforth after a brief interval, the emperor was to be a homeless and restless vagrant, beckoned hither and thither at the summons of some frontier crisis. The situation was assuredly much changed since Tiberius proposed the maxim, then undoubtedly of highest sagacity, "*Non omittere caput rerum*," and since Nero in the prime of life and vigour waged war by legates, just as Domitian, the proud and suspicious, paid visits of courtesy by deputy (*ex more principatus per nuntios visentis*).

The Romans grumbled in their usual irresponsible fashion at the wise decision of Tiberius, who sent his sons to hear the complaints of mutinous legions, and refused to leave Rome to superintend measures for repressing the Gallic revolt. But they complained equally of the long absences of later Cæsars on important business, anywhere rather than at the capital. Whether the "Folk-wandering" and the reconstruction it entailed took the statesmen of the empire unawares, it is impossible to say; but with the exception of the station of the Rhenish and Danubian legions, everything else had to give way to this new

pressure on the frontier. The imperial régime was eminently calculated to satisfy a pacific State or aggregate of States, whose sole aim was peace and the calm enjoyment of material comfort. Around the basin of the inland sea, which Pompey had delivered from its last pirate-vessel, dwelt, or rather slumbered, peoples with historic names and homes, carrying on the innocent mimicry of local government under a firm yet tolerant control. In spite of the blind or credulous belief of humanitarians to-day, the race, at least in Western Europe, has not progressed with stately and measured step to the final triumph of Peace from unspeakable riot. Just as coercive measures, police, prison, death-sentence,—were comparatively unknown in the family conclave, or its larger form, the city-state; so war was to all early nations a displeasing if frequent episode in the social life. It was neither a business nor a profession, but a regrettable expedient. Part in its dangers was the inseparable right and duty of a citizen: πολεμοῦμεν ἵνα εἰρήνην ἄγωμεν. A mercenary class of expert champions was a later invention; just as the foreign bodyguard which protected the despot,—himself like war, a mere needful but regrettable expedient, marking a period of transition. The idealist meditation of Hobbes discovers in early society, *bellum omnium contra omnes*, because *homo homini lupus*. We need not at this date point out the unhistoric character of such surmises,—which are but the arbitrary background on which to depict his favourite thesis,—the centralised monarchic State (that is, France since Napoleon, under any and every superficial formula of government). As a fact, early society, when it begins to be human in a real sense, when it issues from the "pack" or the "horde,"—is profoundly pacific and knows no force but moral, no need for any other. The *patriarchal* authority is acquiesced in, not because it is potent, but because it commands respect, instinctive it may be and not easily to be uprooted. No doubt the father is obeyed in fear,

Wise and gradual liberalism of early empire; anti-aristocratic, anti-national: necessary appeal to force and interest.

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whether of his present wrath or future displeasure as a maleficent spirit; or of the whole system of unalterable rules, which seem to influence savage life quite apart from any visible sanction of force or penalty. And this we may surely not inaptly call moral. It is as the world grows older that appeal to force becomes necessary in the ultimate resort.

This the doctrinaires of human progress on their own lines are reluctant to admit. Yet the fact and the reason should be alike obvious. The agreement upon the father's authority, the content of the legal code which is but family tradition and precedent crystallised, the unseen yet dreadful menace of ancestral spirits, to whom all change in custom is impiety, the entire and significant absence of all compulsion or caprice under the "dead hand" of tribal usage;—all this is unmeaning in the larger aggregates which go to make up a state;—different peoples and classes and tongues, each with their own special code and cult, which in their neighbours excite only horror or derision. In the "spacious times" of early society, tribes and clans with the natural instinct of a savage, carefully avoided each other and kept by some unspoken agreement to their own hunting-grounds ("*invicem vitabundi*," as Tacitus might say). It is pressure and increasing population that makes war; just as it is economic or fiscal distress which precipitates revolution among peoples deaf to the sermons of Idealism and the eulogies of Liberty. War is a natural expedient to prevent overcrowding; the conquering caste will, as humanity and sympathy made way, spare to enslave, their captives in battle; and thus the first great step toward international law is taken. This tribe, welded into compact discipline by the successful leader, imposes its will on the conquered people,—whether as distant provincial, or resident alien, or client, or lastly, as slave. It is only this latter, who in the merciful treatment of antiquity is taken into any real relation, partnership of interest rights and religion. The rest are and must remain

outside; and in the utter want of any common principle of code usage or superstition, they are amenable solely to an irresponsible force, the will of the superior. There was much truth in Thrasymachus' estimate of State-law, *τὸ σύμφερον τοῦ κρείττονος*.

Empire reverts to pacifism: armies again needful; 'ability' and the open career: liberal policy.

§ 3. Until Alexander showed glimpses of a better way, until Rome effected a consummate realisation of his dream, the only conception of foreign dominion was self-interest. Rome had already progressed far on this road, when the last century before Christ was filled with domestic tumult, largely arising from this problem, the relation of the subjects to the dominant race. Once more the far-sighted and liberal statesmen, sages, and jurists of the first two hundred years reverted to the early pacific conception of the State and its duties. It was with surprise, reluctance, and secret alarm that the emperors resumed their arduous post as sentinels on the frontier. It is probable that the revolution which summarily displaced Severus Alexander (235) was, at least in part, a protest of the military against the civil element; a recall sounded by blunt and straightforward soldiers from a policy of barristers, women, and philosophers to a recognition of the real dangers, which lay not in the Senate's rivalry but in the barbarian menace. Yet so sincere, so ingrained is the pacific and defensive character of the empire, that no attempt is made to enlarge its boundaries, except by Probus (276–282); and it is significant that the same emperor who wrote joyfully that Germany would soon be completely subdued, also wrote that in a short time soldiers would be superfluous. Enough, and perhaps more than enough, has been said to show that the whole justification of the imperial system lay in its stoppage of war or domestic disturbance; that the nations who had gladly welcomed the imperial figure, and rested beneath its shadow, were entirely unversed in warlike pursuits; in the profound quiet which was its immediate outcome, and in the deep-seated principle to which the empire reverted, that

Empire reverts to pacifism: armies again needful; 'ability' and the open career: liberal policy.

war is a regrettable episode in the life of nations, to be entered on only as a means to peace. Thus the protection of the frontier or of Cæsar, divine but vulnerable, fell upon expert and professional shoulders; son succeeded father in the moral and orderly camp-towns, which recognised and encouraged in the soldier the ties of the domestic hearth, the pursuits and influences of peace. For the army was the hereditary civiliser of the waste and desolate places, the pioneer not of brutal force but of useful mastery over nature, of the refinements of Helleno-Roman culture,—which Tacitus in his malevolent apotheosis of the "noble savage" called an integral part of slavery. So far was the empire from being a military despotism, with Cossack and "najaika"; the army was rather the most liberal of all its institutions; and its commanders the most advanced of statesmen. In merit, in loyalty, in ability, the emperors recognised no distinction of country or of lot; or indeed of religion, save in the exceptional periods when popular suspicion and nervous panic was excited by a secret sect, which refused a simple homage to the generalissimo. Just as the later Teutonic kings displaced an intractable nobility of birth by an aristocracy of efficiency; so the emperors substituted less arrogant agents for the Senate, and more valiant guardsmen for the disloyal and undersized recruits of Italy. Others have traced the gradual extension both of the civil franchise into complete equality,—and of the coveted right to join the legion and rise to the highest place in the service of Rome; and it is not the purpose of this work to repeat what more competent students have already done.

For we have only to call attention to the great but largely unconscious contest in this age, not merely between paganism and the Church, but between barbarian and Roman influence in the State and its defenders. A natural preference for good material turned Constantine and Theodosius into the deliberate

partisans of the newer races. It is doubtful whether this favour was of necessity mischievous. The empire, the negation of privilege, the redressing of excrescence and anomaly, might reasonably argue, like modern statesmen, that settlers and soldiers of whatever race were naturalised subjects of equal rights with the original stock. If the supreme place was thrown open to competitive merit without distinction of race, why not the lower steps of the hierarchy? If the imperial system had produced desolation in the provinces, and unwarlike if turbulent effeminacy in the great urban centres, why should it not retrieve its unintentional error by grafting new life into the decaying trunk? Pestilence, the curial system, slave-cultivation,—such were the obvious causes of decline. How far, so the question presents itself, is the remedy of barbarian soldiers and colonists an "active element of disintegration?"

Empire reverts to pacifism: armies again needful; 'ability' and the open career: liberal policy.

§ 4. It would appear that this welcome to the necessitous but stalwart alien, if extended with mingled firmness and sincerity by a succession of tactful princes, need have implied no sinister consequence. It was a natural and logical corollary of the whole imperial policy. The Roman emperor was bound by no Spanish etiquette to wait immovable in a chair, slowly roasted by a fire which precedent would not allow him to touch. He was under no obligation to guard with stubborn zeal a frontier for a people which was slowly becoming extinct. There is ample proof, beside the notable profession of loyalty by Ataulphus (Orosius, vii. *fin.*), that the Goths might have become the stoutest and most trustworthy supporters of the throne and system. It is true that certain usurpations, like that of Magnentius, seemed to constitute a genuine peril not for a dynastic family alone, but for the empire. And yet, if we look back into the third century, the heroic but usurping defenders of Gaul were no nationalist pretenders or anti-Roman separatists. They were Augusti, and doing the work of Augustus, preparing the way for

Teutonic egoism and loyalty,—an offset to bureaucracy and conservatism.

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an abler and more efficient sovereign, and yielding, as Tetricus, not without relief. It is, no doubt, poor comfort to a threatened representative of a dynasty to assure him that it is only his personality and not the imperial system that excites hostility; Ammianus reminds us in a notable passage of apology for the vindictive Valens, that a ruler in whom the majesty of Rome is centralised cannot but identify his own safety with the maintenance of the system,—to which (as others view the matter) it is just the standing objection. It is quite possible that the reign and character of Licinius Gallienus (253–268) might be rewritten in a very favourable light; and that the seeming indifference to pretenders and schism was due to the farsighted policy of a statesman, who saw in local stirrings and home-rule no serious menace to the stability or solidarity of the empire. The line of British and Gallic Cæsars forms an interesting table; especially the last few names, the obscure Marcus II., Gratianus II., and finally Constantine III.; who with his son Constans II. did good service for the empire, and (as we have seen) secured a tardy recognition from a prince, singularly jealous of his formal exclusive prerogative, and as singularly careless of its exercise. In a narrow sense, no doubt the Gallic sedition in the middle of the fourth century shows the presence of an "element of disintegration"; but the successful pretender, like many a one before and after, would gladly have sheltered himself beneath the respectable ægis of legitimacy, and like Maximinus I. himself have become "more Romanist than Rome itself," or "more ultramontane." It would, I think, be truer to say that two conscientious princes of weak and therefore stubborn character, were responsible for the great misfortunes which befell Rome: Valens, whose insincere response to the Gothic plea for asylum created irksome and dishonourable conditions, which his ministers had neither means nor intention to enforce; Honorius, whose repeated refusal of Alaric's demands, by no means without

precedent, turned a champion of the empire into a ruthless foe. It seems evident that the whole system of Teutonic settlements would in time have profoundly modified the bureaucratic and centralised administration then in vogue. But this need hardly be deplored or regretted; and the clear delimitation of the civil and military department by the wise (though not omniscient) reformers of the fourth century might point to a long and harmonious co-operation between barbarian and Roman, soldier and administrator. In a later division of this work, it will be pointed out in justification of the wantonly destructive policy of the great Imperial Restoration (535–565) that there was no principle of cohesion or of progress in the Gothic or Vandal royalties, nor even in the Frankish family, that strove to fill in vain the vacancy in the West. It must be clearly understood that a vague allegiance to Roman suzerainty was never thrown off; and curious instances recur in unexpected quarters of the genuine and abiding affection with which the Cæsar was regarded, absent and heretical though he might be. Nor did the imperial tradition ever die, or the reverence for the idea become extinct, until the great event of Christmas 800 gave once more the Western world an Augustus of its own. It must be confessed that the empire, receptive of all that was genuine and efficient, would have found the uncouth barbarians a better agent and a more wholesome influence than the obscure chamberlains of the court, with their nerveless quadrisyllabic names and uncertain ancestry. Vacillating between confidence and mistrust, Valens and Honorius gave alternate hearing to the friends and the foes of the larger policy. It must be feared that the anti-foreign or "xenelastic" crises, the "pogroms" aimed against imaginary criminals (as in the drastic treatment of the Stiliconians in 408)—partake of the hatred of interested and corrupt place-holders whose long impunity is threatened. Orosius and Namatianus, Christian priest and archaic Gallo-Roman noble, unite in abusing

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Stilico; yet if Rome was to suffer an emperor who "reigned but did not govern," it was surely better to leave the helm of State with Stilico than with Olympius or Eutropius. But with the early death of Theodosius and the massacre of the "tutor" he left for his sons, the final breach with the barbarians was merely a question of time.

Signal defect of empire (as of all professed absolutism): cannot control own agents.

§ 5. Again, a whole-hearted welcome to these interesting but dangerous suppliants might have opposed an obstacle to one of the mischievous currents, which was driving the ship of State on to the quicksands. And here we approach a topic which is of signal interest to us to-day. The tendency of all civilised institutions is towards uniformity and centralisation. The local usage, the special immunity, caste-privilege, hereditary office or exemption, district autonomy, are out of keeping with the fully realised modern State and must disappear, unless the present lines of development are arrested. The earlier empires, as the continent of Asia, true *officina gentium*, grew fuller, gathered the scattered tribes into a precarious unity for the new uses of war, or the gratification of ambitious sovereigns; but they were contented with tribute, acknowledgment of allegiance, and military levies in time of need. It was only with Alexander and with Rome that some inexorable pressure from the unseen tried to force an imperial regimen into a strict and uniform model; and this very gradually. It is a mistake of the recently departed idealism to believe that every ruler must needs be a jealous and interfering busybody;—every unhappy subject a critic and rebel of this encroachment, striving to break the chains and emerge into independence. The exact opposite is, of course, the spectacle which history or experience provides us: the multiplication of duties and responsibility, as a rule, is unwillingly undertaken; and the deadweight and reactionary conservatism of the people is much too supine to assume its majority and look after itself. Little by little the sphere of government enlarges, and takes

under its protection private leisure and unexplored departments of life.

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It has often been said that the empire failed when it ceased to *govern* and began to *administer*. The details of organised routine (which if centrally controlled, must be uniform) ill befit the spacious generalities of a protectorate or a "hegemony." And yet subject and prince alike were pushed irresistibly along a path which led to the servitude of the former, the curial dungeon and the caste-system, and to the overwhelming of the latter by a high-tide of duties, to none of which could he personally attend. And yet it must be confessed that, compared with modern attempts at "empire," the princes of Rome succeeded to a wonderful degree in reconciling the two interests,—what Tacitus calls, "*Res olim dissociabiles principatus ac libertas.*" The empire was no doubt happily free from the turmoil and artificial feuds and parties of the representative system. No great "council of the empire" gathered together for useless debate small groups of rival or inimical nationalities and creeds. Other and perhaps more effective means were invented or to hand, for the free vent of public opinion and criticism. For this was by no means behindhand in finding expression, in caustic satire or in those riots and tumults, which aimed disloyalty only at the agents of government, never at the system itself. Tiberius, as we have seen, complained very reasonably that the Senate did not take a serious share in the care of justice or administration; he spoke, we must believe, with the perfect sincerity of an ancient aristocratic, even Whig, family. Modern writers point out that very little substantial independence underlay the specious phrases of alliance and autonomy among the more favoured cities in the realm. I would not willingly impugn the municipal honesty of the first and second century; but we need go no further than the New Testament and the tenth book of Pliny's letters to satisfy ourselves that the control of local justice and finance rested more safely in the hands

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of an imperial representative than with the local authorities.

The whole end and aim of the imperial system was to secure *responsible* government, amenable to discipline, to law, to prescribed routine, and (if I shall not be thought paradoxical) to a well-defined moral standard. Let the doubter contrast the serious behaviour of the governors in the Gospels and the Acts, under Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero, with the viceroys of a modern State, ruling defenceless dependencies. It is quite likely that really responsible government is only possible either in countries and under constitutions like our own; where the public opinion of the higher classes is the real controlling influence;—where a national and somewhat self-conscious Puritanism (irrespective even of religious orthodoxy) keeps a vigilant watch over public life; where (once again) the government or the ruling class is not sharply distinguished from the commonalty; where really momentous issues are settled anywhere else but in the formal homes of debate and executive. Or responsibility may be found under genuinely despotic but spasmodic rule,—that regimen for which Liberals of all ages have sighed so inconsistently. But the benevolent tyrant was in the early days of the Roman system not an exceptional event, or a "happy accident" (as Alexander I. said of himself with pardonable vanity). The real happiness of peoples lies not, as the older Liberalism fondly imagined, in the formula of the constitution, but in the behaviour of the official world. Experience proves that the bureaucrat of an unlimited monarchy, and the functionary of an advanced republic, claim and exercise a power of petty tyranny, an opportunity for dishonest gain, an exemption by "administrative right" from the general rules which regulate a citizen's life. In the disconcerting freedom of the French republic no less than under the "unspeakable tyranny" of its ally the Czar, a private house may be ransacked without redress or reason given, a subject haled suddenly to

the confinement of a prison and hectored into a confession of imaginary guilt; a large and industrious portion of the community may feel so outraged by the indifference of the centre to their interests, that districts like Moscow or Montpellier may present all the appearance of civil war; irreligious rancour may persecute the conforming Catholic official in France, as in the East the State-orthodoxy may attempt to extirpate Jews and dissenters; and in both we may notice the same evil,—the absence of any outspoken and honest public opinion in the upper classes, and the consequent rule of an insignificant minority. Much has been heard of late of the Grand-Ducal Camarilla; but this secret and unauthorised influence (even if it exist outside heated, though Liberal, imagination) has its exact counterpart in the coalition of the wealthy in the States of America, in the unaccountable force wielded in France by the anti-clerical Freemasons.

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The Roman nobles had formed a class apart, immune from many of the restrictions of the average citizen. The exacting standard of moral tone was insensibly relaxed when, like an English cadet in the early days of Indian annexation, he left the society of his equals to rule inferiors. The empire, we have seen, restored in a great measure the idea of government as a trust for which the exercise was accountable to a central tribunal of known impartiality;—not to a venal assembly of men who only longed for similar opportunities. Officials were, in effect, controlled as they had never been before; and the trust of the provincial in the central authority had every reason to increase. When the agents of the sovereignty, still merely supervising, were recruited more and more from the less conspicuous classes, and the State-service presented an open career to any man of ability,—the easy ideal of Cæsarism, such as we have it in France at the present moment, was accepted by all. The subjects were saved from the trouble of self-government; and the smallest question was sent up to the personal head of the republic: just as the replacement of a

Signal defect of empire (as of all professed absolutism): cannot control own agents.

tile on a French parsonage had to go up to Paris even before the Revolution, which started in a vague cry for liberty, and ended in riveting the fetters of State-supremacy. The exceptional luxuriance of transcendental literature and interest in the first four centuries must strike every student. The din of war and tumult never penetrates into the pages of Plutarch, of Apuleius, of Origen; and it is hard to believe that the serene and optimistic principles of the Plotinian system were elaborated by a favourite professor at the court of Gallienus; and that the most troublous epoch in Roman history should be marked by the finest and least austere presentation of the pantheistic hypothesis. The central office became more and more charged with public burdens; and Cæsar's functionaries were drilled and organised into fixed rules of behaviour and promotion, irrespective of the caprice of the transient ruler; a firm check not only upon his arbitrary will but, it must be confessed, on any project of generous reform—indeed, as in every civil service or bureaucracy, a final obstacle to change, whether for good or evil. The members of this official class were thus emancipated from that severe and vigilant supervision, which had been applied under the early Cæsars and the adoptive emperors.

It is easy to exaggerate the effectiveness of this control; and I have no desire to lose my case by pleading for a verdict of perfection. But the regretful retrospect of those who suffered in later times from irresponsible bureaucrats and a powerless monarch, may help us to understand that responsible government under the empire was something more than a pretence. Men like Laurentius of Philadelphia, like Synesius of Cyrene, looked back to the times of personal government as to a golden age, never to return. And meantime, so conscious was a serious prince of the impossible task, that we again direct notice to the famous offer of Æmilianus (253), who desired to retain as the chief imperial duty watch and ward on

the frontier and surrender the whole civil administration to the Senate. This premature division of the civil and military sphere very naturally proved abortive in the middle of the third century; and the sweeping reforms of Diocletian and Constantine fell once more into complete centralisation. The departments were effectively severed, but both were amenable to the overworked emperor. Little was secured by duplicating Augustus and Cæsar; or by multiplying the prefectures, and "cutting the provinces into morsels," as Lactantius calls it. Still the credit or the dishonour of the whole administration, in its failure or success, fell on the shoulders of one. Every one recognised in Diocletian the ruling spirit of the "quaternion": the years 306–324 were given up to mere anarchy; Constantine resumed undivided sway after the dismantling of Licinius; and to the end of our chosen period (324–457), in spite of partnership, men respected or detested the chief and single Augustus, as the author of their woes or their prosperity. Something like a rough-and-ready control, as of a military court-martial, was indeed exercised by princes who rose from a private station; inured to habits of discipline and obedience before undertaking the difficult task of guiding others, and living in the open light of day the vagrant life of an active warrior. The conscientious but "shadow-bred" royalties who succeed these greater men are (as we must often repeat) at the mercy of a flattering "entourage," who lay aside their hatred or envy of each other for the sole purpose of deceiving their master.

Signal defect of empire (as of all professed absolutism): cannot control own agents.

§ 6. How could the emperor be relieved of this intolerable burden? for whether he controlled his agents or not, in the eyes of the world he was solely responsible. It might be hazarded whether Teutonic subjectivity might not have formed a salutary alliance with the great Roman objective,—ideal and abstract objective as it was, although ever embodied in a personal ruler. The Teuton was incapable of the classic veneration for law, but he was capable of a

Possible use of Germanic frankness and subjectivity: indecisive policy of Rome.

Possible use of Germanic frankness and subjectivity: indecisive policy of Rome.

strong personal attachment. I am far from being able to endorse the following generalisation of the Greek attitude to life as a full and complete account of a versatile spirit, that had in it at least as conspicuous an element of subjective criticism and rebellion; but it undoubtedly represents a phase of mind common enough in East and West alike, and especially in the age we are discussing. "We can" (says Professor Bury, H.L.RI. i. 4) "regard our experience as destiny—fortune and misfortune as alike determined for us by conditions beyond our control. It was in this objective spirit that the old Greeks regarded their experience, and in this way they were content; for it never occurred to them [?] to exalt subjective wishes of their own in opposition to the course of destiny, and grieve because such wishes remained inachievable." Now the whole confident blitheness, if you like boisterousness, of the Teutons lay in the opposite belief; that the world lay open to the knight-errant, that a strong will can impose its canons on others and win success over material things and human minds. No over-indulgence in the studies of Reason had produced in them the torpor of despondent culture. They formed a novel, sanguine, and enspiriting element amid a prevalent fatalism. Their ideals had little regard for State, public spirit, general welfare,—or indeed with any august but intangible abstraction. They understood and appreciated the sanctity of wedlock, the call of personal loyalty, the silent appeal of helpless infancy, born to inherit the cares and splendour of a great name. Of their simple character it might truly be said *mentem mortalia tangunt*, if we limit these mortal happenings to the home, the family, the dynasty, the tribe, and exclude the larger possibilities of nation, race, and universe; in which many thinkers, born to be agents, have found in seeking peace, only an indolent lethargy. This reversal to the rudiments (as I have elsewhere tried to show) is by no means a step backwards. After a long reign of culture and traditional

institutions, it makes for healthiness to have an inrush of the open air and of primitive emotions. The democratic basis of the imperial system, the lowly birth and late promotion of some of its finest champions, saved it from the enervating uniformity, the equilibrium of balanced forces, into which a modern State is apt to subside; unable either to advance or to retreat, to reform effectively or to check remonstrance criticism and discontent. What hinders progress today and leads to apathy is the uncertain relation between human effort and natural forces,—what I may term the *democratic* as compared with the *scientific* outlook. Even the Romans had some suspicion of the futility of enterprise, and a deep sense of coming calamity brooded over the mind. To this, Teutonic subjectivity provided a very useful contrast and antidote. Might there not have ensued a new alliance between *imperium* and *libertas*, in a sense other than Tacitus comtemplated? Unquestioning obedience to law, as if sacrosanct and divine, is a mere trait of savagery. Mere acquiescence or pious resignation (whether in an attitude to the world of nature or of man) is not merely the negation of progress but the denial of man, of worth, of reason.

Possible use of Germanic frankness and subjectivity: indecisive policy of Rome.

The 'Meditations' of Marcus Aurelius happily for the Roman world never represented any but an insignificant fraction. Under the thin veil of abstract pietism, his creed conceals a complete distrust in the meaning and efficacy of thought and of action; for to no school is the title ἄλογοι more completely suitable than to the Stoics, who professed to discover in the universe, and to apply in every department of human activity, the sovereignty of Reason!—To this fatalistic despondency the Teutons were entire strangers. Into their native mythology, which is one long eulogy of conscious enterprise and reflection against brute force, they had engrafted a peculiar form of Christian belief, which suited their temperament and their earlier legends: even the unquestioned heir-apparent had to

Possible use of Germanic frankness and subjectivity: exclusive policy of Rome.

win his spurs, to be "made perfect through suffering." Their political temper united loyalty with independence. In the same way the Anglo-Saxon race to-day is faithful to hereditary chiefs; but is suspicious of its own ministers and representatives, and jealous of the encroachment of the central power. It was eminently suited to become the bulwark of a throne, tenanted by an Arcadius or a Honorius. There was the birthright, which excited the wonder of the Roman historian: "*Insignis nobilitas aut magna patrum merita Principis dignationem etiam adolescentulis assignant.*" There was the ample liberty, which *Salvâ Romæ maiestate* would permit the settlement and the free exercise of gentile and tribal usage, under the valuable conditions of allegiance and military subsidies. Even the suspicious eye of Valens had seen the inestimable reinforcement of the dwindling armies of Rome in the Gothic petition of 376. Ammianus, xxxi. § 4, "Ex ultimis terris tot *tirocinia* trahens . . . collatis in unum suis et alienigenis viribus invictum haberet exercitum"—*cf.* § 10. Gratian drafts the enemy into his own legions. "Oblatâ juventute validâ nostris *tirociniis* permiscendâ." But it is wasted energy to prove the confidence with which the Romans incorporated the vanquished into their own ranks: the policy which meets us as early as the days of Cæsar and Agricola, they never reversed, and never repented. In a word, the barbarian settlers, whom Salvian acclaims as setting a high ideal of conduct to a corrupt civilisation, whose rulers Sidonius paints with favourable brush in striking outline,—might have provided everything that Rome needed: free yeomen, honest officials, and good soldiers. The blame of this failure to incorporate lies not with the "barbarising" party, with Constantine or Theodosius, but with the indecisive and often treacherous counsels which prevailed in the courts of Ravenna and Byzantium. After the extinction of the Stilconians, and the refusal of Alaric's heart's desire, it was apparent that the two civilisations could not settle down together in amity.

The West solved the problem by expelling a nominal Cæsar and overrunning Latin culture; the East (as we shall see in our next division), by expelling the barbarian and rekindling the still glowing embers of Roman life and Latin traditions amid the Oriental peoples.

Possible use of Germanic frankness and subjectivity: indecisive policy of Rome.

CHAPTER IV

THE ERA OF THE PATRICIANS; OR, THE BARBARIAN PROTECTORATE

PETRONIUS MAXIMUS V.	455-456	?nom.
AVITUS (in Gaul)	456-457	prov. nom.
FLAV. JUL. VAL. MAJORIANUS	457-461	BARB. nom.
FLAV. LIBIUS SEVERUS IV.	461-465	BARB. nom.
[Interregnum]		
FLAV. PROCOP. ANTHEMIUS	467-472	co-opt. East (? birth)
OLYBRIUS	472	BARB. nom. and FEMALE right.
GLYCERIUS	473-474	BARB. nom.
JULIUS II. NEPOS	474-475	co-opt. East.
ROMULUS	475-476	milit. nom.
FLAV. ODOVACAR (*patric.*)	476-491	
THEODORIC (*patric.*)	489	
king in Italy	493	

Growing independence of various corporations: Church, Civil Service, Army.

§ 1. THERE are three principal divisions of class and function, of which even in primitive society traces can be detected; and they correspond nearly to our modern list—Church, Army, Civil Service. The process of evolution in society, while it implies a centralising of responsibility, implies also a specialising of function. The career of the citizen in Athens or in Rome displayed the ease with which he served as a judge, fought in the ranks, or as a magistrate took part in those religious rites which were the condition of the divine favour. With the gradual extension of interest beyond the city-walls arose the need of special work and expert concentration. The early empire shows the beginning of distinctness in duty and function. It was particular training, definite if narrow sphere, and clearly marked employment that made Cæsar's officials useful and capable; no less than their immediate accountability to a personal critic, instead of a corrupt or corruptible assembly of peers

or fellow-criminals. The bureaucracy of Rome fell into the hands of specialised and unpretentious men of business. The army of Rome followed the same path; it was recruited, at ever-widening intervals from the seat of government. For in the end the military profession became the natural calling of the dwellers in the Balkan peninsula; whence in the hour of need proceeded the long series of emperors who restored the shattered state to solidarity. Beside the local cults, to which Rome showed at all times a kindly indulgence or a tolerant indifference, the State worship consisted in a vague and universal recognition of the sacred mission of Rome and of the emperor. But a new belief or tendency, running parallel and rival to the imperial development, had once more specialised a certain department of human life and interest. At last its claims appear irreconcilable with the comprehensive system, which prided itself on the inclusion and consecration of all mundane business, pursuits, and studies. Unprofitable time is wasted in the inquiry, whether the adoption of the Christian faith by Constantine hastened or retarded the disintegration of the realm. However tempting the application of a moral, the deduction of a significant lesson, from the facts of history, much valuable energy is misspent in this unfruitful idealism. We trace the course of human affairs by attempting to enter sympathetically into the motives and the troubles of the chief agents; and by seeking to trace the secret currents flowing beneath the surface, of which they were often the unsuspecting manifestations. In such a survey, the apportionment of praise or censure on a modern standard is surely out of place. We record with interest the sincerity of the actors, and the steady and irresistible march of unconscious forces. The alliance of the chief but independent powers of the present and the future kingdom was inevitable; and it is idle to speculate upon its beneficent or malign influence on the development of mankind. This emergence of the

Growing independence of various corporations: Church, Civil Service, Army.

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Church, as the successful competitor or valued partner of the State, is the final step in the specialising process, which had operated by splitting up the interests and the business of the early citizen. Advance in culture is fatal, in highest and lowest pursuits alike, to the fable of the "admirable Crichton"; the good student or administrator or soldier or artisan, must give his time to some exclusive task, well-chosen and congenial, but limited. And the whole tendency of the later empire was towards firmly drawn lines, distinguishing and divorcing class from class, and trade from trade. It is a commonplace of the tiro, in that easiest and most fallacious study, historical ætiology,—that the foolish and isolating policy of the emperors in the matter of finance and of caste caused the ruin of the imperial system. We may, in the first place, adduce strong reason for objection to the phrase "ruin"; and we might, if we were in a Hegelian mood, show that an institution or organism is not condemned but beatified, if it passes with easy transition into other forms of life:—and that, strictly speaking, the imperial system is with us to-day, modified and transformed, but still potent with a magical charm, as well as the influence of more sober legacies. Our province is limited to noticing the irresistible tendency towards a crystallised society, each class with its peculiar duties, habits, aspirations, and schemes of life and behaviour, owning to little real sympathy with the members of another community or guild. It is no paradox to say that each town or city in the empire, whatever its distance in miles from the seat of government, was in truth nearer to the capital than to its next-door neighbour:—that peculiar topical isolation which is the wonder and the despair of humane workers among the poor, in those districts especially which have a local significance for the rate-collector and the police, but no vestige of organic or articulate life. Each small township pursued its usual unchequered existence in unconscious or deliberate mimicry of Rome or Byzantium itself; and within it,

each class had its traditional rites, banquets, assemblies, trades-unions,—from the once honourable *curia*, now filled with distinguished but embarrassed prisoners of the decurionate, down to the smallest and meanest corporation of handicraftsmen. It is impossible to saddle individual or system with the blame of this resistless movement to uniformity and to isolation. We may pronounce it in effect mischievous, but we are not therefore nearer appreciation of its origin or effects. Like all facts in history, it is there to be accounted for, not to be censured or made the vehicle of a schoolroom moral.—Thus the specialism, which attends naturally on advancing civilisation, invades and penetrates all relations of life, and all classes in the State; it marks off sharply and distinctly; and this atomism made the control of the State still more indispensable, not now indeed as an actual administrator, but as a dominant idea.

Growing independence of various corporations: Church, Civil Service, Army.

§ 2. For the emperor, representing the State, had handed over large rights to the two independent powers, that will monopolise all our attention, in the Middle Ages. Arbogastes, like the French major Grimoald, was some eighty years before his time, in the blunt defiance to Valentinian II.: "he had not conferred, and could not revoke, his military commission." Yet the independence of the army-corps or its complete predominance is a feature of this fifth century. But power is usually exercised indirectly, and loses much of its force by public recognition; and men are ready enough to acknowledge a new master if the old forms are kept, if the fresh influence enjoys the substance without the prerogative. So too with the Church,—its chief officers, becoming more wealthy and more trusted, usurped with the fullest popular approval and imperial sanction the control or supervision of municipal affairs; but, apart from this wide and generous usefulness, the episcopate was still an autonomous and independent corporation. It derived its powers from no *congé d'élire*,—which marks to-day in our own country one

Large surrenders of titular autocracy; the pioneers of Mediævalism.

Large surrenders of titular autocracy; the pioneers of Mediævalism.

last expression of expiring Erastianism, of the fallacy of a "Christian" commonwealth. Here, acquiring form, *esprit de corps* and solidarity during the Dynastic period, were two great institutions or corporations,—Church and Army, with whose mutual interaction, alliance, suspicion, lies the future of Western Europe. We may debate, in idle and innocent academic sport, the exact moment when the Middle Age begins; but it is clear that Constantine in recognising the authentic and parallel credentials of the Church, Theodosius in leaving as guardian to his sons an estimable barbarian general,—are the unquestionable pioneers. These avowals implied the surrender of the old theories; the ideal integrity of the State and of its self-sufficingness, of the unique and indivisible source and fount of authority. Here are powers loosely indeed united, under the still sovereign unifier, the emperor; but they are co-ordinate; and the spiritual and the military force look elsewhere than to the civil authority for their mandate and their duties. We are reminded of Philo's immediate dichotomy of the divine powers into *kingly* and *creative;* which together take so much attention that the invisible and secluded Ground of both (like Schelling's Absolute) receives little notice. The supposed autocracy of the Byzantine sovereign, which Agathias attributes to Justinian, which Finlay regards as consummated in the ninth century,—need by no means involve the independence or free choice of the monarch, rather his serfdom by tradition and usage (as in the case of China);—not the supersession of the *consilium*, which was the legacy from the Roman magistrate who had been transformed into the Oriental potentate, but its paramount influence on affairs. There is a curious passage in Laurentius, the disillusioned civilian, who sheds so much light on some inner phases of the fifth century. We must elsewhere do justice to his estimate of the functions of kingship, worthy to be set beside the outspoken criticism of Synesius; and shall content ourselves here with a brief summary. "*The monarch is no*

tyrant, but is elected by the free suffrage of his subjects to higher grade; and his peculiar mission is to shake none of the laws of the commonwealth but constantly to preserve the traditional aspect; to do nothing beyond the laws in his own irresponsible caprice but put his seal to the unanimous decision of the chief men in the State; to show to his subjects the affectionate care of a father and ruler" (*De Magistr.* i. 3). It is abundantly clear that step by step with the increase of prerogative, we must note the increase of actual restraint. If the philosophic statesman of Philadelphia had been able to read Hegel, he would, in the picture of the constitutional prince who dots the "i's," have recognised something akin to his own ideal. But we are speaking of the Byzantine half, wherein both Church (in spite of much creditable frankness to the autocrat) and Army (in spite of occasional turbulence) remained duly subordinate;—and the emperor was rather the puppet of civilian or chamberlain, and the slave of custom, rather than the figure-head of military adventurers or even ambitious prelates. It is the Western development rather, which now challenges our attention; and it is obvious that the central authority under successors of Theodosius places sovereignty "in commission": and, while an oath by Honorius' head is more binding in sanctity than appeal to God himself, effective power, in spite of eunuchs and their cabals, drifts steadily away from the palace to the patrician, the patriarch, the patrimony.

Large surrenders of titular autocracy; the pioneers of Mediævalism.

§ 3. We have called this age the epoch of the Patricians, and although it is not our wont to burden this section with dates and names,—it may be necessary to justify the title by a comparative table. In the chapter entitled the "Rejection of the Barbarian Protectorate," we shall draw notice to the different destiny of the Eastern realm, which for two-thirds of this century seems dominated by the same Shogunate; and it is in this connection that we shall notice the importance of the reign, or rather of the crime, of Leo I.

Imaginary annals of 'Patrician' rule in the West: its derivative mandate.

Western "Patricians"		Eastern "Patrician"
Arbogastes	(*c.*388–394) *Valentinian II.* 375–392, *Eugenius*, 394	[*Pulcheria*, 408–450
Stilico	(395–408) . *Honorius* (395–423)	
Aëtius	(434–454) . *Valentinian III.* 425–455	Aspar (430–471) { *Theodosius II.* / *Marcian* / *Leo I.*
Ricimer	(456–472) . { *Majorianus* / *Libius Severus IV.* / *Anthemius*	[*Verina*, *Ariadne.*]
Gundobad	(472–474) . *Glycerius*	
Orestes	(475–476) . *Romulus* (*abdic.* 476)	*Zeno*, 474–491
Odovacar	(476–493)	*Anastasius I.*
Theodoric	(493–526)	491–518

Imaginary annals of 'Patrician' rule in the West: its derivative mandate.

It would be easy to rewrite the history of the empire from Honorius to Justinian, after the fashion of an ancient chronicler, somewhat in this manner: 'Now it pleased Theodosius to leave Stilico as guardian and regent for his two sons, and especially for Honorius, who was married to his daughter. He governed the realm well and carefully, until wicked men murdered him in 408. And after that certain ladies of the imperial family directed affairs, Placidia, widow of Constance III., and Pulcheria, virgin daughter of Arcadius. They sent Aspar and his father Ardabur to reinstate Valentinian on his uncle's throne, when for a time a low-born clerk had seized it. And in the West, Placidia governs through her Minister and Patrician, Aëtius; and in the East, Pulcheria, through Aspar; though in truth Theodosius the younger had the emblems of rule and was pious exceedingly, so that he copied Holy Writ in fair colours. Now when Valentinian was grown a man, and had reigned longer than the blessed Constantine himself, he slew Aëtius the Patrician, in a fit of passion, thereby, as was said, cutting off his right hand with his left; and, being murdered himself by certain henchmen of Aëtius, he left Rome in confusion; for he had no son. Then Eudoxia, his widow, called in an alien king, who reigned in Africa, to avenge her, and he came and made Rome his prey, carrying away treasure, so that all were downcast and afraid to choose an Emperor. But in Gaul, Avitus is

'made Cæsar, and Rome receives him gladly. And 'Ricimer, who was a son of a Sueve and of a Goth, 'comes and governs Rome as he listed for sixteen 'years (456–472), though one Majorinus wrote many 'laws which were not obeyed, and lost many ships at 'sea to no purpose. And when he died, his nephew, 'Gundobad, of a Burgundian father, has power as 'Patrician in Rome; until he be obliged to go and take 'the kingship in his own country. And the councillors 'in Byzantium send over once and again some one to 'bear the name of Emperor in Rome, and to make 'Regent whom he would. Then rose Orestes against 'his master, and sent the Emperor away to the palace 'of Diocletian, where the man he supplanted was then 'a holy bishop; and he made his own son Emperor, 'little Romulus, and got from him the name of patri-'cian, without which it is not lawful for a man to do 'anything in Italy. And it is said that he learnt this 'device from a man of Isauria, whose name is not meet 'for Christian ears to hear, so barbarous is it; he 'marrying Leo's daughter became father to the new 'emperor, Leo the Little. And on a day the child, before 'all the people, put a diadem on his father's head and 'called him Emperor. Thus he became more than 'ever Orestês could become; for he was Emperor for 'seventeen years (474–491), and held his place, though 'many tried to turn him away,—and above all his 'mother-in-law. But this Zeno, as the men of Byzan-'tium were taught to call him, liked not the pride of 'Orestes, who had set up his own son as Emperor; 'and he sent against him a true Patrician, whom he 'named himself, to rule over Italy and Rome—a brother 'of one of his own bodyguard, Onoulf. And Romulus 'being but a boy, asked leave to put off the crown; and 'a great house and much money were granted to him. 'And Zeno took over the affairs of the West, and the 'Senate sent to him all the purple robes and diadems 'which Romulus had worn; for they said, 'one em-'peror was quite enough at one time.' And some say 'that Zeno thought to send back Julius, his kinsman,

Imaginary annals of 'Patrician' rule in the West: its derivative mandate.

Imaginary annals of 'Patrician' rule in the West: its derivative mandate.

'who was governing his own realm in Dalmatia, instead 'of Odovacar; and others say that Odovacar first over-'threw Orestes, and then prevailed on the Senate to 'make Zeno name him Regent of Rome. But Zeno 'was a prudent man and full of wiles; and I think that 'the device was his, that he might get back Italy; as 'our Lord Justinian hath again done in our own time. 'And Odovacar ruled well; but pride lifted him out, 'and he engraved his face on a coin, contrary to the 'law of the Roman commonwealth, which will have 'none but the visage of the Emperor alone on its 'money. Then Zeno, though aged, was wroth, and 'sent Theodoricus to overthrow his wicked servant, 'who had lost shame and knew not his place. And 'he made Theodoricus Patrician; and for a reward of 'his labours promised him the government, 'until,' 'said he, 'I come myself and take the crown.' And 'he got the mastery of Odovacar, and governed well 'for thirty years (493–523). For he was faithful to the 'emperor; and when he overcame, he sent to tell 'Zeno, and to take from his hands the right to govern. 'But his envoys were downcast, for Zeno his lord was 'dead and another reigned in his place, who had taken 'his widow and the kingdom as well; for this too is 'a notable law among the Romans. So they returned 'and saw not the countenance of the new ruler; and 'that is the reason why Theodoricus on his moneys 'engraved the head of a young girl and not of an old 'man of seventy years, though the superscription, 'Our 'Lord Anastasius,' is right, if the image be false. Yet 'they so loved Anastasius that long after he was dead, 'and when the regents of Italy were rebelling against 'their master, they put his head on their pieces, to 'show they were still servants of the empire. And 'the Frankish king, Clodovicus, who overcame the 'Wild Boar who rose against the emperor in Gaul, 'sent humbly to Anastasius; and he sent him gifts in 'return and made him Patrician, and as some say, even 'Consul too. So he ruled the Romans and the Franks, 'and the land had peace, and was obedient to the

'Emperor who reigned in the city of Constantine. And 'indeed to Zeno before had the Senate and people of 'Rome put up many statues. But Theodoric grew 'old, and was a heretic; and this same Senate and 'people sent over to Byzantium to demand help from 'the ruler there. And his name was Justin, and he 'could not write, but he was wise and prudent above 'others. Then Justin told his nephew, who is our lord 'to-day, that he must deliver Rome from the evil 'regent who persecuted the Church, and killed those 'who were friends with the Emperor and the true faith. 'But in time he died, and a wicked man, Theodatus, 'forgetting whose servant he was, slew his daughter, 'and put his head on coins, which are to be seen 'to-day, as proof of his rising against his lawful master. 'And after many days and much fighting under Beli- 'sarius the general, Narses is sent by the Emperor to 'be the Regent and Patrician in Italy.' So far by a writer in the very middle of the sixth century; but we might complete the fictitious chronicle by the words of a "continuator" in the first half of the seventh :— 'Now it came to pass after the death of the great 'Justinian, that Narses, being but a eunuch, dealt 'treacherously, and called in the Lombards, because 'the Empress Sophy had sent him a distaff. So they 'spread over the land; and the Emperor sent Patri- 'cians who ruled in Ravenna, and were sometimes 'called Exarchs. And to Carthage, too, were rulers 'sent, bearing the name Patrician; and though in 'Italy the Lombards had much land and cared nothing 'for the Emperor, and in Africa many Moors ravaged 'the open country, yet was the greater part faithful, and 'sent tribute and cornships to the city of Constantine, '—until Heraclius the Patrician refused to give food to 'the wicked Phocas, and sent his own son to become 'Emperor instead of him. And too, in Spain, great 'cities and havens were obedient to the Emperor, 'and sent tribute and heard Roman law; but within, 'the Goths held the land and took counsel with the 'bishops how they might administer the country and

Imaginary annals of 'Patrician' rule in the West: its derivative mandate.

Imaginary annals of 'Patrician' rule in the West: its derivative mandate.

'elect their kings. Now the Frankish king was more 'faithful to the Emperor; and when Heraclius sent his 'edict that the Jews be made Christian all over the 'world, Dagobert the king, as in duty bound, carried 'out the emperor's will.'—This mythical history was never written in effect; but it might well have been written. The title "Patrician" implies the position of regent or viceroy in the fifth century; and although at its revival by Constantine it involved no official duty, only titular rank, its very indefiniteness was of use in concealing the enormous powers wielded by an Aëtius, a Ricimer, or an Aspar. And it was under the garb of this decent fiction (as we have essayed to show) that the Western Empire slowly expired; or rather by insensible gradation, detached itself from the Byzantine system. The entire history of this transition is better written under the title "Patrician" than any other heading. Vespasian, himself a plebeian, when he enrolled Agricola among the patricians, could never have guessed the exclusive and dignified part this title would have to play in the future. Until the middle of this century, its use is vague and purely honorific, as it became in later Byzantine history. We cannot doubt it was borne by Aëtius, as by his contemporary Aspar, "first of the patricians." It emerges into a precise meaning and a technical use in the famous rescript of Majorian to the Roman Senate: "I, with my parent and patrician Ricimer, will settle all things well." It is far more definite in West than in East. Here it tends to become unique and exclusive; as there could be but one empire (though the emperors might be two or many), so there was one patrician claim to the title. This was the tendency, not any legal limitation. Is not Ecdicius, the brother of Sidonius' wife Papianilla, named patrician for his military services in Gaul? and do we not learn from that passage (*Ep.* v. 16) that in popular esteem it occupied a position midway in the hierarchy of dignities between prefect and consul? The special mission of Odovacar and

Theodoric turned them into plenipotentiaries of the Byzantine court; High Commissioners for the settlement of Italy and the re-establishment of order. There was no question as to the strictly *derivative* nature of their authority.

Imaginary annals of 'Patrician' rule in the West: its derivative mandate.

§ 4. The ruler of the Roman commonwealth interfered in no way with the barbarian choice of "king"; he did not even at present claim to invest feudally the elected barbarian ruler, as he did later in the land of Aëtes, Colchis and Lazica. But the Western hemisphere was largely occupied by Teutonic immigrants, —settlements made by imperial sanction, allotments given to alien veterans, and the gradual "infiltration" rather than hostile inroad, which had taken place since the opening of the third century. The Latin population, that society into which Sidonius or Paulinus introduces us, held aloof and apart; and as the tastes of the two communities lay in opposite directions, they agreed amicably to differ. The Latin peoples had long been used to respect any and every official, indifferently, if only armed with imperial credentials. Even in the disorder of the fifth century, the success of the exploits and bold deceit of Numerianus under Severus would be inconceivable.—But it was a matter of supreme inconsequence to what nation or race the emissary of Cæsar belonged. It is true that the savage pulpit-invective of Salvian suggests a virulent hatred of the whole venal and oppressive system; from other sources we know that this was not the general feeling; I need not quote for the hundredth time the language of Rutilius, who in spite of the fame of Claudian or Ausonius, is really the most familiar poet of this age. Indeed, the impeachment and condemnation of Arvandus, prefect of Gaul, described by Sidonius, reminds one how little in outward circumstance the imperial system had altered since the earliest days of the empire,—that is, of responsible rule in the provinces. Still, as under the vigilant Tiberius, a culprit was haled before his peers; and

Tribal chieftain becomes imperial official.

Tribal chieftain becomes imperial official.

still, as if "an image of their former independence," a free Senate weighed the evidence and convicted the criminal, without any reference to august inclinations: still a powerful friend could obtain remission of an extreme sentence by pleading with the sovereign's prerogative of pardon. Yet gradually the tide of imperial officialism ebbed in retreat; first, Britain saw the last of the Roman eagles, then the north of Gaul. But in the towns there was little change in the outward features of administration; and when an anomalous *Roman* usurpation in mid-France of Ægidius and his son Syagrius was overcome by Clovis, in the last years of the fifth century, the Latin provincials, so far from seeing in it the end of Roman dominion, settled down once more under the rule of a man "whom the emperor delighted to honour." Clovis was nothing to them but a chieftain of a barbarian army and judge of a barbarian settlement; until the title *vir illuster* and the consular insignia and largess informed them that Anastasius, the distant but unique lord of the world, had recognised in him the legitimate ruler of all he could get. It is another story to show, with the help of the careful and convincing studies of De Coulanges, how largely Merovingian royalty borrows of Roman absolutism; and how this curious and inopportune policy of imitation led first to the *roi fainéant*, and next to the Teutonic reaction of the majorate; and lastly, how this vigorous Shogunate itself fell a victim to the centralised pretensions (which it borrowed from its fallen predecessor), and to the disintegrant wave of local particularism, which finally in the tenth century submerged the imperial ideal.—Thus, authority was derivative; and the craving for legitimacy led to some curious postures and problems. As when the Norse ruler seeks ratification, in all sincerity, from a monarch he heartily despises and can insult with impunity; and his cousin in the south of Italy humbly pays homage for the Neapolitan realm to

a baffled and defenceless pontiff, whom he has just captured in fair fight.

Connotation of 'parent' and 'patron'; the modern 'advowson.'

§ 5. But we are not yet in the tenth or eleventh century; and we must draw attention to the part played in the restoration of a Western Cæsar by the said title. The significance of the word is by no means yet exhausted. First, a comprehensive name for the heads of houses, whose coalition formed the kinsman-State; it became a generic designation for the older families; and afterwards by a legal fiction dear to the Roman mind, this exclusive aristocracy was recruited by arbitrary selection, so that there might never be wanting "patrician" families in the Senate. The formulators of the new tables of precedence in the fourth century, casting about for titles which should express dignity rather than office, happily not yet aware of the sonorous resources of the Greek tongue invoked seven centuries later by Alexius,—revived the word as a personal rank. It denoted neither ancient family nor official post, but recognition of past service and a titular dignity. In later Byzantine usage it forms the inevitable complement of every list of hierarchic distinction,—thus continuing the precedent of Constantine. But in the period just reviewed, a special connotation was undoubtedly attached.

It may have now carried with it in the usage of Ricimer's age the further idea of "father of the emperor," as Stylianus was termed by his grateful son-in-law, Leo VI., *basileopator*. Majorian, we have seen, couples it closely with the word *parens;* and there can be no doubt that gradually with the title patrician became associated the further notions of adopted father, and of patron. Weighted with these pregnant ideas, the term was launched in the West for a further period of usefulness. The secular traditions of republican Rome, never utterly extinguished before the middle of the fifteenth century, allowed and fostered periodic revivals of obsolete nomenclature. Thus, in the tenth century we find the term "senator" and

Connotation of 'parent' and 'patron'; the modern 'advowson.'

"senatrix" used in a special sense by those who claimed to represent genuine Roman aristocracy, and to hold in check the clerical pretensions; and many students have been puzzled to trace the connection between these self-dubbed "fathers" and the ancient Senate, which can never have survived the wars and desolation of the sixth century. In like manner the gradual aversion of the Pope from the religion and the policy of the Eastern emperor, led to a fresh use of our adaptable title. Constantly borne by the exarchs, it must have represented to ordinary ears incapacity, intermittent meddling, and sometimes overt oppression; for even in the fifth century is the term *græculus* applied with Juvenalian scorn to the Byzantine nominees, Anthemius and Nepos, and Italian experience of the exarchate after Narses can scarcely have improved the unfavourable connotation. But, as applied by the Pope to the Frankish "Shoguns," speaking in the name of the still autonomous city of Rome, it revived all the earlier association of lay support and patronage. Just as the emperor leant on the arm of a patrician in the period of fifty years from Valentinian III. to Romulus, as the indispensable and effective supporter of the throne,—so later the pontiff appealed to the secular and armed championship of the orthodox Frank. And in this conferment of an ancient title, we see glimpses of that furious conflict which agitated the Middle Age,—the precedence of pope or of emperor. The moral sanction, represented by the successor of S. Peter, needed the arm of flesh in a wicked world; but it did not thereby confess its dependence, its inferiority, or its derivative character. Rather, as with the Brahmin conception of royalty and its use, was the protector of the Holy See to take title and mandate from it, and act merely as the blind and loyal executive to its decrees. The whole issue (as among many others Pope Pascal II. clearly saw) was compromised and all hope of definite delimitation abandoned, by the immersion of the

Church in territorial concerns and ownerships. As the Apostles selected certain men to "serve tables," so the defenceless Church appointed protectors to guard and even to administer. But the celibate caste of ecclesiastics, with the elective character of the office, permits frequent vacancies and interregna, even snapping the continuous thread of policy: and there is nothing to hinder the transmission of the lay-post of defender from father to son, with increasing wealth and means of encroachment, until the quondam servant is transformed into a redoubtable master.

Connotation of 'parent' and 'patron'; the modern 'advowson.'

§ 6. In the choice of a civic *Defensor* in the reign of Valentinian I., or of an "Advocate" or *Vidame* of later benefice bishopric or abbey, of patrician in the eighth century,—there is much that is congruent with old Roman usage, and with an instinctive demand of human nature. The need of the correlative position of *patron* and *client* is not felt when the world is young; the tie of kindred and the custom of the tribe is all-sufficing. But war destroys a primitive equality, and sets in isolation or mere unhappy atomism the captives who manage to escape. Usage, kinder than man's intention, makes the slave a true member of the family he serves, a partner in its religious rites, and a bearer of its name. Later, the intermediate condition is devised, and the "freedman" marks the earliest instance of alien enfranchisement. Without, in hopeless estrangement, are the *metæcs* or "plebeians," whereas the released slave is a member, integral though subordinate, of the house. When the functions of the State (only just issuing from domestic duties and councils to larger interests) are still scanty and ill-understood, a natural tie between great and small grows up of itself, whether among Latin or Teutonic races. The frequent and gaping interstices in the ruling of the city-state are filled up by *voluntary* relations, entered into for mutual defence, or for the exchange of dignity and protection between rich and poor. Where everything else moved along the rails

Clientship, common feature in society where State-duties limited or rudimentary: superseded.

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of strict precedent, with a heavy and fatal slowness, this spontaneous tie was a matter of free choice: the Roman client, whether individual or distant city, might select and even change the patron; and the days of Roman glory were bound up with the honour paid to this relation. So the German youth was free to choose his Count, and enter the retinue of the strongest, bravest, and most generous chieftain. Thus the essence of the personal tie of Feudalism is found equally in Latins and Teutons; and it becomes for the student an idle or misleading problem to inquire whether the germ of the system is found in Rome or in the forests of Germany. It is indeed useless to find a special origin or *habitat* for a sentiment which is as old as human nature itself; which will always be strong when the State is weak. We may say that the empire dealt a fatal blow at this primitive relation of faith and affection; or that it was already disappearing in mutual distrust and malevolence. Certain it is that the empire charged itself with functions which hitherto had been matter of private venture, confidence, contract.

So pleased was the society of Southern Europe with this offer of uniform administration and treatment, that it seems eagerly to have surrendered the various unauthenticated safeguards which had been devised, against the absence of police, legal code, religious unity, impartial referee and standing army, in the old cousinly State. The history of the new imperial functionaries, who came to fulfil all these manifold duties, is a melancholy record. At the outset, welcomed and revered as the bearers of justice and clemency hitherto unknown, they end by incurring the dislike and jealousy of the master, who cannot control them, and of the people, who cannot escape. The institution of the *Defensor* has been well described as the first instance of a government setting up of fixed intent a counterweight to its own power: "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*" and the surprised interrogation is echoed

Clientship, common feature in society where State-duties limited or rudimentary superseded.

when we see the Merovingian threatening the Counts, presumably his own chosen agents, if they dare to encroach and intrude on the hallowed areas of privileged estates. The *Defensor* was freely chosen; and we cannot doubt that, like hereditary patrons of pre-reform boroughs, like noble high-stewards to-day, this office ran in certain families, and was transmitted by a natural instinct or prejudice to the heir. So too, when the imperial power and prestige was giving way before the martial vigour of the new settlers and recruits, the emperor was free to choose his regent or protector. So once more (and here we rejoin again the main current of the argument) the Pope and people of Rome were free to choose their patrician. In a humble way, the owner of a modern advowson (*advocatio*) stands in the same relation to the Church, to which he can present, as the patrician Charles to the See of Rome; and it must be regretted that the mortality of families, the unrest of migrating landowners, the partition of estates, and finally, the whole modern conception of mere contract as the basis of every relation, has altered this honourable and responsible post of advocate or patron into a matter of purchase; though, in passing, we must deprecate any attempt to remedy a natural and perhaps inevitable development, by raising a ludicrous and artificial charge, the legal fiction of *simony*. When the early disinterested pride in a loyal retinue, a grateful bishop or chaplain, a devoted borough council, is corrupted by the modern query, "What direct advantage shall I reap from this duty?"—then the ancient titles become mere disguises for a relation purely contractual and mercantile. For it cannot be stated too explicitly by the impartial historian or philosopher of history, that it is primitive human nature and earlier ages which are under the sway of Ideas,—and not, as is fondly supposed by superficial Meliorism, our own days: for these demand, with dispassionate accuracy, the casting-up of accounts

Clientship, common feature in society where State-duties limited or rudimentary: superseded.

of profit and loss. We may here conclude this already long section on the later development of the patriciate. Theodoric was clearly recognised as charged with the right of passing on this title and dignity; the anomalous and indefinite relations with the Eastern suzerain and with "*his* Senate" were never crystallised; but it is clear that no resentment was felt at the faithful copying of imperial fashions, officials, etiquette, by the court of Ravenna or Verona. And when in Italy there ceased to reign a "patrician" exarch who had taxed but not protected, when the detestable Lombard race paid the penalty of their insolent behaviour to the Holy See,—this was the most natural solution of the matter; that the Pope, ruling and representing a capital largely autonomous by tacit agreement, under Heraclius as under Theodoric, should appoint a new and effective protector. In the term "patrician" once more, the old idea of earthly parent and gratuitous champion or patron was found as an integral part of its use and meaning.

Western realm relinquished to rival factors, Church and Army: future in hands of priest and knight: East retains civilian (=imperial) and central control.

§ 7. We have surveyed the rise of one of these two independent powers into which the ancient State divided. As the Middle Ages represent the struggle of the two leash-mates, Church and Army, so in our modern time the conflict is waged between Church and State; and even if we make large allowance for religious indifference, there is ample scope for new and serious developments in this interminable duel. While the strictly civil power disappears in the West, except as unconscious machinery at the disposal of the first-comer,—the Church and the Army (or its fragments) are left in sole possession. In reading the history of Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, we are already in a mediæval atmosphere. He is the great mediator between insolent barbarian king and trembling Augustus, between Augustus himself and his overbearing task-master, the patrician regent. One short scene in a chronicle (representing nearly coeval opinion) is for us of profound significance:

John the Pope has died after the fatigues of a fruitless mission to the Eastern emperor; and before his body laid out in state for burial, a man, suddenly seized by a demon, is cured by contact with the bier and leads the funeral troop. "And when the people and senators saw this, they began to take relics of the Pope's cerements; and so with great joy is the body taken outside the city." It is with such a scene and with the death of Boëthius and Symmachus, that the history of imperial and classical Rome ends, and the records are opened of the mediæval and ecclesiastical town. Having thus ushered the reader into the full story of clerical interest, it is no part of our purpose to pursue either the development or the methods of the new spiritual power. Neither the niceties of dogma nor the intrigues of prelates will find a place in these essays, dedicated as they would fain be, to quite different topics. Our concern is not with Church nor with Army, neither with councils nor campaigns. For these, a straightforward narrative is sufficient; and however difficult to trace the detail of dogma or discipline, there is but little genuine complexity in the issue. Starting with a certain and closely circumscribed aim, it is enough in this connection to recognise the patent facts; that the Church has already great power, and will have still more; that the armed forces abroad in the Western hemisphere, loosed from any central control, will fight with each other; and that from this welter the conception of the civil and secular State will once more emerge and put an end to the feudal era. For us in this epoch, our task would lie rather in extricating some tokens of the strange and anomalous survival of ideas,—other than those of spiritual tutelage or the strong arm. The concern of a mediæval historian who is not a mere chronicler is to trace the continuity of the imperial tradition, the break-up of Christendom (later synonym of the older empire) into fragments, and the present system (which can scarcely be a final State) of jealous

Western realm relinquished to rival victors, Church and Army: future in hands of priest and knight: East retains civilian (= imperial) and central control.

Western realm relinquished to rival factors, Church and Army: future in hands of priest and knight: East retains civilian (=imperial) and central control.

and militant nationalities, oppressed by urgent perils, which are simple, social, and economic, rather than profound or political. Let us therefore leave the future of Western Europe to the priest and the knight, to the pope and the emperor. Centralism and the Roman Idea will find an heroic exponent in Charles the patrician and Augustus; but it does not gain more than momentary recognition. We must wait until the fall of the Eastern throne, until the opening of the sixteenth century, before the conception of the civil State emerges once more from the background. Long the obedient vassal of the Church, or the puppet of baronial particularism, the State comes forward under the ægis of Monarchy, to demand once more the absolute subordination of *both* its late masters.

Strangely different lot of two 'barbarians,' Zeno and Odovacar: in this contrast, secret of diverse destiny.

§ 8. It is now time to compare the destinies of East and West, significantly unlike. From the abdication of Romulus until the last decade of this century (476–491) there were ruling in both Roman hemispheres two men, whose history and character and fortunes present in strange mixture startling points of resemblance and of contrast. Both are, to speak candidly, barbarians from an uncivilised verge or "march"; Zeno (son-in-law of Leo I.) is captain of an Isaurian train-band, with whose effective but dangerous and costly assistance the emperor threw off a Teutonic (?) protectorate;—perhaps saved the realm from the fate of Rome, not by leaning on alien arms, with alternating confidence and suspicion, but by the bold policy of identifying this company of wild mountaineers with the whole majesty of the Roman tradition:—and Odovacar, brother of one of Zeno's henchmen, at first captain of mercenaries from the banks of the Danube, Rugians, Scyrians, Herulians, Turcilingians, and hailing from that quarter himself, claiming for his troops a more definite land-allotment than the patrician Orestes was inclined to bestow; finally, no worse than Philip in 244, merciful supplanter of the

last handsome boy-Augustus, and viceroy and delegate of this very Tarasicordissa, son of Rusumbleotus, who by a happy accident is now Zeno and Augustus. We have no intention of challenging comparison with the eloquent and picturesque narratives of three great English historians, who have made the last half-century of the Western empire live again for us. Let those who will, consult these pages to learn how the two grotesque rulers fell out, were reconciled, and were again embroiled; or to trace the romantic histories of Basiliscus, actual emperor for two years, of Illus and Harmatius, or the pathetic and untimely death of Zeno's two sons. All we would here point out is the problem, why was the solution so different in East and West? Why does one barbarian quietly put an end to the imperial line, and another, in spite of defects of character, tide over the same eventful period of fourteen years, and hand on to an aged and pacific successor a realm undeniably strengthened and reinforced? We cannot help proposing the idle and unanswerable question; what if Orestes, far more of a Roman than the Isaurian, had become emperor himself, and by tactful diplomacy had won the recognition of Zeno? or what if, a year later, Odovacar had become acknowledged partner on a legitimate throne rather than a precarious vassal? We are on firmer ground when, confining ourselves to the palace and capital of the East, and to the temperament and interests of its inhabitants, we endeavour to trace the causes of the development there.

Strangely different lot of two 'barbarians,' Zeno and Odovacar: in this contrast, secret of diverse destiny.

Accordingly in the next book we shall again refer to the most signal event in the reign of Leo. Honorius had consented to the death of Stilico in 408, believing in his treachery and in his design to substitute Eucherius for the son of Theodosius. So too, forty-six years later, had Valentinian III. cut the chains of his bondage to Aëtius. But the fortunes of the West lay with the successors of Aëtius and Stilico; not with a fictitious imperial sovereignty: the results were ephemeral and there was no settled policy, only

Strangely different lot of two 'barbarians,' Zeno and Odovacar: in this contrast, secret of diverse destiny.

sallies of spasmodic and personal spite. In the East, both circumstances and intentions were altogether different. The advisers of the crown had definitely wished to be rid of the Teuton. Under Arcadius there had been the affair of Gainas and of Tribigild,—told for us in the curious mythical and fabulous form by Synesius. Then there is the long *paradynasteia*, as it was termed, of Aspar the "king-maker"; and the expedient of Leo, which at first sight seemed so unpromising, as he called in one barbarian captain to oust another. Yet while Odovacar remains to the end of the chapter "one who secured a third of Italy for his troops," Tarasicordissa is transformed into a very respectable representative of the imperial line,—which as we must not forget, has already included the two Maximini, first and second. No doubt one effective reason of the stability of the Orient was the influence of family tradition and of feminine prestige. Galla Placidia had left no successor; and the imperially connected "Greeklings" sent over by the Eastern court were unacceptable to the Romans and founded no house. Detached and isolated are the last strictly Roman figures in Roman history; there is no bond of union or of sympathy between them except the now almost unmeaning title of Augustus. But in the East, Pulcheria had ruled till the middle of the century, and after the astonishing elevation of Leo, Aspar's bailiff or intendant, a similar veneration soon grew up for the imperial ladies, Verina and Ariadne,—or at least they acquired a similar power. For sixty years Ariadne inhabits the palace of Constantine; her dowry is the empire, and Marcian, Zeno, and Anastasius alike inherit through the wife. We shall record a similar tendency in the eleventh century, when the Senate and people accept without a murmur or a doubt the rapid succession of Zoe's husbands. We may perhaps wrongly surmise the complete servility and indifference of the capital and the palace to the person, the character, the nationality of Augustus; we should be forgetting the outspoken-

ness of the patriarch to a heretical ruler, the license of tongue and action in the Byzantine populace. It is clear that very obvious limits to sovereignty still existed in the fifth century; when Anastasius had to gain by a pious fraud the account-books of his own officials; and sat humiliated and penitent for all his eighty years in the circus to hear the verdict of the people on his proposed abdication. It may be that the Eastern mind was more inclined to a peaceful succession and acknowledgment of the rights of dynasty and even of distaff; while the West held on with mistaken stubbornness to the fiction of an open and competitive magistracy. But be this as it may, nothing is to our modern minds so surprising as the successful reign and peaceful demise of such sovereigns as Zeno, Justin, or Basil I. some three centuries later. Here then, whatever the reason, is Zeno the Isaurian confronting as Augustus Odovacar the Scyrian (?), and the history of the two portions of the empire is bound up in this contrast. With the one barbarian, the imperial idea is strengthened and so transmitted to a successor; with the other, it is extinguished, and nothing is left standing of the institution or the policy of the man, who is said to have "overthrown the Western empire."

Strangely different lot of two 'barbarians,' Zeno and Odovacar: in this contrast, secret of diverse destiny.

BOOK III

RECONSTRUCTION AND COLLAPSE UNDER THE HOUSES OF JUSTIN AND HERACLIUS: VICTORY OF CIVILIAN AND REACTION TO MILITARY FORMS

CHAPTER I

THE EASTERN REJECTION OF THE TEUTONIC PATRONATE; AND THE ADOPTIVE PERIOD OF MATURE MERIT (457–527 A.D.)

I. Later Pseudo-Flavians:

Flavius Leo I. (Thrac.)	457–474	Barb. nom.
Flavius Leo II. (son)	474	
Flavius Zeno (father)	474–475	Female right.
Basiliscus (bro. of Leo's widow)	475–477	Female nom.
Zeno (restored)	477–491	
Flav. Anastasius I. (husb. of Ariadne)	491–518	Female right.

East retained primacy over Church and Army: the decisive moment in Aspar's murder.

§ 1. The Eastern empire never accepted the "division of labour" proposed by the new settlers. The emperor never sank into the mere president of a civilian hierarchy, leaving to barbarians the defence of the realm and the military force; which in the last resort is the ultimate appeal of authority in all States, however highly civilised. The Roman system was to an extent undreamt of to-day founded upon moral influence, upon confidence in the subject's loyalty, which events justified. It betrayed the same almost laudable weakness before foreign aggression as China; because these two monarchies alone in human history contemplate peace as the normal condition of mankind. Around the favoured area of their realm they drew a line of real or imaginary defences to protect their fortunate citizens. It is impossible then to repeat, except as a paradox or academic "thesis," the fiction of a military despotism. Yet, on the other hand, the sovereign was *imperator;* commander-in-chief as sole fount of honour; and while the Western Cæsar forgot, the Eastern always remembered. A barbarian protectorate was proposed and rejected. The Byzan-

East retained primacy over Church and Army: the decisive moment in Aspar's murder.

tine annals alone among long lines of rulers, have no puppets or helpless nominees. That centralising of power, inevitable in civilised States, was secured under the form of a popular absolutism. A firm hold was kept over the various departments: the Church, the Army, and the Civil Service. The old fallacy of the "dyarchy," the dual control, was wisely abandoned. Hitherto, the emperors had shared their power with some colleague; till Diocletian, with the Senate; after Constantine, with the Church; after Theodosius, with the barbarian generals. The sons of Theodosius, as we have seen, represent just that mild secluded sovereignty of a well-nurtured civilian, of which we have abundant instances in later European royalty. It is our task to inquire into the cause, and perhaps the conscious motives of the sturdy resistance of the Byzantine Cæsars. Why did not the successors of Theodosius II. follow the example of the successors of Valentinian III., on the path of painless extinction? Why did not a series of crowned phantoms, appointed and dethroned by a powerful minister or foreign general, pass noiselessly across the stage and disappear as uneventfully as Romulus, son of Orestes? For the century following the accession of Marcian is an unbroken record of solid work and reorganisation; and each mature sovereign, winning experience as a humble subject before being misled by the splendour of office, built something of permanent value into the great Eastern rampart. We must acknowledge the fact, but the explanation is not so easy.

Indeed, the answer lies partly in the nature and character of the peoples included in the Eastern empire; partly in the absence of any definite barbarian settlements as they moved on with the fatal impulse of destiny, always westwards; partly in the peculiar and successful policy of adoption, which dominated with the notable exception of the great Justinian, in the councils of the Court and Senate of Constantinople. The sovereigns come to the throne

in middle life, some approaching the verge of old age; they are without conceit or youthful illusions; they are no travellers or generals, and care nothing for the parade of office; they toil with ceaseless personal interest in the work of supervision; they are their own ministers of war and of finance, their own foreign secretaries; they are content to remain the invisible and responsible centre of administration, whence the threads of government issue east and west. They can remain firm and impassible in the midst of a riot; and sustained by their conscience, despise the misrepresentation of their policy and overlook the insults of idle factions. War they delegate, as a modern constitutional king, to generals who are never allowed to become their masters. In this whole epoch there is no "power behind the throne." They are less deceived perhaps than a modern autocrat by their own officials; they resign nothing, surrender nothing. It is true that the epoch must open with a crime; but it is done for the sake of the empire; Leo the "butcher" kills Aspar his benefactor. But the personal crime is an imperial benefit. "*Aëtium Placidus mactavit semivir amens*"; Valentinian III., like his unhappy namesake sixty years before, had tried by a similar murder to release himself from tutelage. But he could not bear freedom; and he had no policy. Born in the purple and ignorant as a Chinese monarch or the heir-apparent of the Ottoman throne, he knew nothing of affairs, of the state of the realm which still acknowledged him. But Leo had learnt economy as steward of the foreign general's household; and his ingratitude seemed to save the empire from a pernicious precedent. The attempt to seclude or to coerce the sovereign had failed in the time of Arcadius; it failed again under Leo. Perhaps that action settled the question, whether the Cæsar of New Rome would follow the way of the Western.

East retained primacy over Church and Army: the decisive moment in Aspar's murder.

§ 2. Old Rome in the third century had revolted against a woman's influence, and henceforward we

Century of feminine influence: law of succession never laid down.

hear nothing of female usurpation, if we except the glorious venture of Victoria in Gaul. Indeed, until Helena, mother of Constantine, we do not hear of aught but the names of imperial ladies; and her pious cares are confined to religious interests. Under Constantius, Syria dreaded the wife of Gallus Cæsar; but the tyranny was soon overpast, in the emperor's usual success in all civil and domestic sedition. Justina has some power in the West and a marriage unites the houses of Valentinian and Theodosius. But in West and East alike, the fifth century is guided by females; Placidia, wife of Constantius, and mother of Valentinian, was the successful regent in the minority of a wayward son; and Pulcheria, with unobtrusive sagacity, guided the ingenuous Theodosius II. and chose the elderly and effective Marcian as his successor. Henceforth, some vague right to the purple is transmitted through females. The perpetual interference of Verina, during the troubled reign of Zeno, was mischievous to the State; but Ariadne chose her second husband well, the Silentiary Anastasius. The accession of Justin opens up a new chapter; but Theodora is soon empress, not merely consort of Cæsar; and of her influence in public matters we know nothing but good. Up to the disastrous year 602, the mothers and wives of the rulers come frequently before us in the historians' page. The Empress Sophia selected Tiberius, and perhaps had reason to resent his coldness or ingratitude: and once more the Cæsar Maurice received the right of imperial succession as a wedding-gift. In the seventh century all is changed; we read of Leontia's coronation, of Eudocia's happy marriage to the knight-errant Heraclius, and of her early death, of the luckless second nuptials within the prohibited degrees, of Martina's abortive attempt to associate herself in the government; of the respectful rebuke of the capital. Afterwards, there is scarcely a mention of Cæsar's consort: the nameless wife of Constans III., we know was detained

as a kind of hostage with her sons during his long absence in the West: Justinian II., like Gallienus in the third century, marries a barbarian princess, but we are ignorant of her character and influence; and it is not until the close of the "Isaurian" house that we find Irene, the Athenian, following the precedent of Pulcheria and Placidia in this fifth century:—and we may note that this usurpation becomes disastrous both to the dynasty and to herself. The monstrous regimen of women is a familiar feature in all centralised monarchies which have attained a certain measure of civilisation. National affairs are conducted in the security of the palace rather than on the field of battle or popular assembly; for it is only with the so-called advance of culture that the primitive methods of democratic debate are discarded in favour of swift and secret measures. It is noteworthy that such influence is greatest in countries where the official status of women is lowest; the Sultana Validè, or queen-mother in Turkey, the conspicuous power of Mohammedan princesses "behind the veil," and the regency of a Chinese empress will readily occur. This influence is thus greater where it is uncovenanted and unrecognised; indeed, just in proportion. And this may serve as a caution to reformers, who believe that recognition of full prerogative ensures substantial power. For the sole question of interest is not *how* the sovereign shall govern, but *who* shall govern for him. The recognised claim to omnipotence, whether in heaven or on earth, is at once discounted, and men pass by to do homage to meaner but nearer agents.

Century of feminine influence: law of succession never laid down.

In the course of the evolution of Roman imperialism we have often occasion to remark on the rigid principles and fixed methods which restrain caprice or accident in the administration of law, in the choice of officials, or in the routine of executive. A permanent civil service, we have seen, acquires and jealously maintains its own code of rules, of honour. The

Century of feminine influence: law of succession never laid down.

sovereign cannot at any time be ubiquitous and is often non-existent; yet the government must be carried on. The "Romans" had not unlearnt the wholesome lesson of Roman law, of Roman peace; and if we could penetrate some of the gloom and of the Great Anarchy from Maximin to Diocletian, we might find a curious and unexpected calm in ordinary social life, a peaceful provincial routine, in spite of the constant civil wars and massacres. But the election of Cæsar himself, pivot of the whole, was left throughout to accident. The wide and genuine democratic sentiment, which can be descried through the flattery of courtiers and behind the trappings of autocracy, would never tolerate the presumption of an unquestioned or hereditary title. The Augustan compromise or hypocrisy, with its train of fortunate and unfortunate results, continued to the last, at least during the first millennium. The emperor is still in theory the people's nominee, the people's delegate: the conception of a royal house of immemorial and perhaps sacred origin, is peculiar to the Germanic races; and in spite of the protests of equalitarians the peace of Europe must largely depend upon the recognition of this unique and valid title. It is true that such legitimacy implies a very large curtailment of effective power, even of usefulness; the sovereign and his family may not be placed in any but assured position; they cannot be exposed to the risk of error or of failure. It is by no means a petty envy, but rather this perhaps mistaken respect, which excludes royal princes from responsible posts, for which they may be eminently qualified. Now it was precisely this heavy responsibility which the emperor undertook: it was for this task that the people chose him. A second delegation was well-nigh impossible; he continued to be his own prime minister and generalissimo. Many of the prerogatives of a magistrate under the republic depended on his actual presence in person; just as the grant of pardon to criminals depended on the chance meeting with a Vestal. The

centring of different offices in a single ruler meant the shifting of the entire burden: the temptation to encroachment upon local rights and liberties came from below: it was due (we saw above) to the idleness, the mismanagement, or the supine confidence of the subject, not to the grasping ambition of the ruler. In theory the emperor is always the first official of the republic and cannot shirk his duty. Again and again, the principle of free and unfettered election comes up to secure the State against the perilous effeteness of a once strenuous house: the people resumed its dormant but undoubted rights; just as the lord of a manor resumes possession over a wasted or "ruinated" copyhold. But it is to be noticed this is a last resort in a desperate emergency. The popular sympathy, the unspoken yet effective popular sentiment, was in favour of a peaceful transmission of hereditary right. The "Roman" people jealously guarded its privilege as ultimate repository of all power;—a principle only revived in a half-hearted manner of late years. But being after all human, it looked with affectionate interest on those born in the purple, and never questioned the right of a son to succeed a father. But the elective principle was never given up: the son must be solemnly associated in the presence and with the consent of those who by a decent fiction still represented the scattered millions of "Romans." Protest was made in the constant rebellion against the *person* of the monarch, never against the *system* of the monarchy.

Century of feminine influence: law of succession never laid down.

§ 3. Thus in the Roman Empire there was always at the root of things a certain precarious element, a measure of uncertainty;—which, though a constant source of peril and disorder, was at the same time a "reservoir of vitality." The "Romans" never gave a meaningless homage at the temple of a house, doomed to slow and lingering decay; they had no Merovingians, no Abbassid califs, no mikados immured for centuries in the wooden city of Kioto. A stagnant, reactionary, effete family was recruited

Uncertainty, a source of strength and of weakness: emperor a responsible agent.

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by a brilliant adoption, a barbarian marriage; or violently but seldom set aside by a wholesale extermination. Abstract legitimacy, in default of every other quality of a ruler, had no charm; the conception of government, we must repeat, was strictly utilitarian. A Roman emperor was expected to *do*, not merely to *be*. In the period before us, the personal activity of the monarch is conspicuous, though, as Agathias rightly reminds us, the fulness of absolute power was not enjoyed until Justinian.

The "Roman" people was no more servile in its attitude to the sovereign than the American people to-day in its genuine admiration for a tireless and outspoken president. It is impossible not to believe that the permanent civil service with its realm of officials, the bureaucracy, and the fresh vigour of some blunt and unlettered general formed a judicious balance of order and life; that a system so prolonged met in a way that few modern constitutions can claim to do, the needs of society and the wishes of the people. We cannot say, however, that the Byzantine rule represented in any strict sense the national will, and to-day this would be perhaps the one indispensable title to approbation. Neither Rome, nor the Christian Church, nor its rival Islam, recognised nationality as the basis of a State. It has been well said of a later epoch, that the Eastern empire was a "government without a nation"; and it is even true of this century before us. We have seen in the past annals of the empire that the supreme place was thrown open to competition long before the titular caste-predominance of the Romans was merged insensibly in the wider State. In the third century the "Pannonian" emperors, of doubtful parentage in the Balkan peninsula, completely saved, and in saving profoundly modified the constitution. The Russian peasant of to-day looks upon the Czar as a foreigner and a German, who cannot speak his language; but the sensitive and highly-cultured officials of the Eastern empire saw no anomaly in

receiving the commands of a Thracian Leo, of an Isaurian Tarasicordissa, of a Dardanian peasant, who could only write his signature through a tablet specially prepared and perforated. A modern State, with all its pretensions to absolute freedom of competition, to a clear avenue for merit,—the marshal's bâton, the woolsack, or Canterbury within the grasp of competent ambition,—sets out nevertheless in framing its fundamental laws to exclude the chief place from the list of possible prizes. It is our main concern to-day to make a disputed election impossible.

Uncertainty, a source of strength and of weakness: emperor a responsible agent.

Now the "embracing" nationality of the "Romans" was an ideal one: it was independent of parentage and place of birth; it was additional to that which these accidental circumstances conferred; St. Paul is no doubt first and foremost a Jew, next an inhabitant of Tarsus, and finally, a Roman. It was essential to this theoretical equality, this ideal nationality, that there should be no set or formal qualification for the chief place; that no surprise should be felt or expressed at the sudden elevation of a guardsman, a steward, a centurion; that the Senate, the polite world, the official host (to take the signal instance of Basil four hundred years later than Zeno), should acquiesce in the capture of the autocracy by an ignorant and ungrateful murderer, who had enjoyed neither the training of a soldier nor the experience of a civil servant. The result of this strange union of formula and caprice, of routine and accident, was the avoidance of two dangers: the menace to a free people of a selfish feudal nobility, who cut the royal power into minute fragments, and parcel up the State; and the stagnation of an inert bureaucracy. The central power in its admitted ignorance of sound finance and true fiscal policy might oppress, but it allowed no one else to compete in the work. Conscientious according to its lights, it showed a real sympathy for the people at large, and a well-founded distrust of its

Uncertainty, a source of strength and of weakness: emperor a responsible agent.

own agents. Especially do these post-Theodosian emperors turn their attention to the distribution of fiscal burdens, to the abolition of unfair taxation. The growth of a powerful "optimate" influence was checked, and will not appear again until the disclosure of the strange weakness which lay behind the splendid mask of Justinian's system. Sovereignty throughout history springs from the people and depends on their goodwill. The single desire of the average man is to be "saved from many masters." Whatever the title or form of government, he knows well how limited is his power of protest, remonstance, interference. His unspoken wish is to be left alone; he prefers a distant but effective despotism to the pride of a feudal noble or the undue and indirect influence of a merchant "ring." The strongest testimony to the genuinely *representative* character of Cæsar lies here; that the formation of a National Council was never once suggested. Yet Cæsar was not infallible, and no strange doctrine was accepted of the "divine right" of kings, that "the king can do no wrong." In the most despotic periods we find the plainest speaking to the inefficient monarch. The people never surrendered their right to criticise and to remove. For to the last, Cæsar was "the chosen of the people," as well as the "anointed of the Lord."

Disappointing character of coeval records: claim of emperors to speak 'for the people' amply justified.

§ 4. The historians of our epoch, garrulous about the trivial or the transcendental, supply us with singularly scanty news on topics of real importance: the condition of the poorer classes, the social life and habits of the subjects of the empire, their interest (other than theological), their studies, their agriculture and economics; the relations of workman to guild and to employer, the proportion of freeman and of free tenants to slaves; the obscure general causes that were insensibly changing the face of the empire; the state of Thrace and of Thessaly, gradually depeopled and exposed to the hostile attack, or perhaps still more unwelcome settlement, of

barbarians from beyond the Danube. We would wish to know more of the constitution and functions of the still active Senate; of the bureau and departments of officials; of the rules which guided the training, the duties, the promotion of the civil servants; of the sovereign's initiative,—how far an illiterate emperor without experience was at the mercy of his private chamberlains or his official ministers; how far he took counsel with his advisers, and what means they had for compelling his attention or guiding his choice;—again, of the condition of the garrison, of the outstanding armies, of the frontier troops, of the composition of the imperial forces, and the proportion of foreigners and mercenaries;—and lastly, of the power of the provincial satraps, with barbarous names and ancient republican titles, of their dependence on the personal will of the sovereign, or on the vigilant interference of a colonial secretariat; of the remnants of local autonomy, how far respected, how far extinguished either by careless indifference or the governor's high hand. And, to conclude, the greatest problem of all, why a moderate scale of taxation and the goodwill, ceaseless supervision, and unbounded generosity of the emperors should have resulted in a fiscal system, acknowledged by all critics to be mischievous and oppressive.

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On all these and similar questions, of paramount value to the student of humanity, we are singularly ill-informed. Even the impersonal interest of the Church is largely reduced to the personal rivalries of Timothy the Weasel, Timothy Salophacidus, Peter Mongus, Flavian of Antioch, Macedonius, and the solitary but imposing figure of Simeon on his pillar. Nor does it become a writer of the twentieth century to disparage this interest in the personal; for in this age we are coming back once more to the concrete, the actual, the individual, and leaving behind the Utopia, the ideal, the unsubstantial abstraction. Yet genuine history cannot be

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written with the childish naïveté of the chroniclers: a portent, an earthquake, an imperial edict, a great war, a palace-scandal, an ecclesiastical synod,—all is told with equal emphasis and good-faith; we pass discursively from one to the other, and lose sight of the movement and development of mankind and of the large features of the State, in the empty list of court cabals, or the curious gossip on an emperor's personal habits or suspected vices. We find ourselves suddenly in a new country, a new society; we cannot trace the steps that lead to this transformation without the greatest difficulty; we pass as it were blindfolded and without clue into a strange land, and the familiar names and titles still in vogue are seen to cover features and persons that we fail to recognise. Into such a scene are we ushered in Italy for example, at the opening of the tenth century: novel faces and characters, of which the previous age has given but scanty hints; general disarray and a masquerade of satyrs under the dignified dress of older gods. So in our own history we shall note the gulf which separates the reign of Maurice from that of Heraclius I.; the conspiracy of ashamed silence which keeps secret the details of the unspeakable Phocas' rule; the terrible intimation of Theophanes, twice repeated, which assures us of the total extinction of the Roman army in eight years, two soldiers only being saved like the more faithful leaders of the children of Israel. When the curtain rises again the old landmarks have disappeared and we do not know our bearings.

These complaints are part of the stock-in-trade of the modern historian; it is his task to create anew a plausible theory of the current or tendency whither things are setting. He sees the goal, the end, and is alive to scanty facts or detail which may help to explain. He magnifies (while warning himself against over-certainty or pragmatism) a single observation into a general statement, and builds his fabric of hypothesis with the slenderest of material. He does

not seek to chronicle and to record, but to interpret tentatively; and if he be wise, he will not dogmatise but suggest. Finlay not seldom shows a real power of insight and intuition into the probable cause of a certain development; he has not accumulated data for a conclusion, but he feels that he must be right in his assumption, and puts forward his views, on the aristocratic reaction after Justinian, or the effects of conservatism and reaction in the eleventh century, on scanty evidence, but without hesitation; and he is justified. The limits and strict duties of a professed historian will always be canvassed with dubious result. Few are competent (although unfortunately many profess) to examine all sides of a single age, a special period. It is unlikely that in detail or in principle the accurate chronicler of a campaign can guide us without slip through the tangles of a heresy or the labyrinthine palinodes of Church councils. The art and architecture may be a sealed book to a patient and sympathetic student of the literature. The political and constitutional development, in itself a special and a comparative science, cannot be rightly traced by one who is unfamiliar with the evolution of mankind in general; and to-day, specialism (with whose demands the span of human life has not alas! kept pace) cannot allow such a leisurely and impartial survey. In confining our attention mainly to the political development, which is above and beyond the springs of personal motive or character, we are indebted for our superior knowledge to the fact that the result and the issue lies on the page of history before us. We can trace the rudiments of the weakness which beset the successors of Justinian, not merely in his own policy, but in the very conception of the Cæsar's office. In taking for our subject so large a portion of accessible human history, we are aware that the treatment must seem superficial; but it is after all well-nigh impossible to deal successfully with a period in strict isolation; and the defects of premature specialism are too clear in the industrious

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toils of others that we need surrender the one signal merit of British historians, — a large canvas and sympathetic if subjective colouring. That much in an epoch so remote and obscure must rest on surmise, is to be regretted; but, while we complain of the meagre treatment of contemporaries, we may justly inquire if it is possible for a writer to understand his own age? Will any one to-day be bold enough to prophesy the social and political development in the century which is before us? And can we expect historians of the fifth and sixth centuries to understand the drift of the current that carried the critics along together with everything else? For the stream of time does not permit the voyager to disembark and gain the bank at his leisure or convenience, to take accurate measurement of the rapidity of the stream or the destination of the vessel he has just quitted.

With all our ignorance, we must feel ourselves better qualified to appraise the work of these princes than their own subjects who watched them at their task. We shall not fall into the error of Carlyle or of Hegel; we must neither depreciate nor overrate the personal initiative. We cannot doubt the true *representative* character of the imperial line of Rome; no ignorant and moribund dynasty, ruling long, as some Eastern family, in a country to which they had come as alien conquerors, to which they remained ever since complete strangers. But they spoke for the people, from whom they sprang; they inherited and reverenced the traditions of Rome, the *instituta majorum;* in their most daring innovations, they still assumed the humility of pious restorers, and believed themselves instruments of a purpose not entirely their own. If we may believe in a Race-Spirit, continuous and undying in a nation or a great political system, we can recall at once the instance of Rome. From it receive inspiration and guidance princes drawn from the four quarters of heaven and almost every known race. It was a favourite boast of the "Romans" that they lived under a consti-

tution and were ruled according to law; while the Persian, slave yesterday, general to-day, and headless trunk to-morrow, could only watch with anxiety the capricious moods of a master. It is this general continuity of principle from Augustus to the end of our chosen period, that renders the history of the empire not only instructive, but to a large extent certain. There is nothing arbitrary or personal in this development; the oneness of the empire; the grandeur of Rome (long after Rome had ceased to belong to its own realm); the welfare of the subject (*τὸ ὑπήκοον*); the purity and uniformity of religious belief and practice; the orderly succession to office; the welcome extended to loyal foreigners; the resolute surrender of aggressive warfare; even (in its defect) the constant tendency in the enjoyment of profound peace, to relax the care of the military chest;—in a word, the pacific, tolerant, and civilised aim which Rome in the West was the first to propound to an astonished world; many centuries after China had stereotyped the idea of their celestial civilian, the emperor; and shown the truth of the motto, "*L'empire c'est la paix.*"

Disappointing character of coeval records: claim of emperors to speak 'for the people' amply justified.

§ 5. The period before us is one of quiet recovery, of which we see the fruit in the expansive policy of Justinian. We are mercifully relieved for a space of the tedious and unmeaning campaigns on the Persian frontier. For more than seven centuries these wars had been waged with varying issue and with no result; the changes on the map are insignificant; for neither Arsacid nor Sassanid dealt a serious blow to the substance of the empire; and the falling away of the South-east under Heraclius was due to the spiritual zeal of Islam and the new forces of disintegration in disaffected schismatics. But at this time there is an almost unbroken peace on the Eastern side; and the raids of the trans-Danubian tribes have not assumed the menacing significance, which they will have after Justinian's death. The sagacity of Anastasius constructs the Long Walls,—a strange monument of

Eastern realm sharply divided, urban and rustic population.

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strength and of insecurity, which recalls to mind a similar precaution in the Chinese Empire. The general well-being is attested both by the number of usurpers and by the intensity of the religious, or rather theological, interest. We cannot doubt that a wide gulf separated the instincts, the sympathies, and the beliefs of the country and the town. The empire was no novel constitution; which swept all previous systems into a centralised monarchy. Nothing was formally abolished; neither the simulacrum of republican usage at Rome nor the distinct local administration of the city-states, which went to make up the vast aggregate. It was a network of such city-states under a protectorate, or a hegemony. The inhabitants of the chief towns in the Eastern empire were idle and turbulent, and lent themselves readily to any violent propaganda, especially of abstruse metaphysics; as in later times the streets of Bagdad ran with blood in the disputes on the created or uncreated Koran, the precise nature of the Beatific Vision. Religious persecution is not the entertainment of kings or the monopoly of inquisitors. In dealing with the urban population (in spite of the episode of Thessalonica), we must find fault rather with the meekness than with the tyranny of the central government. Without formal representatives, without political rights or safeguards as we understand them to-day, the noisy spectators of the circus and amphitheatre, allotted into arbitrary colour-factions like German students, often become the arbiters of imperial policy and the real masters of the situation. It is true they were without genuine aims or sincere convictions, without a true patriotic regard either for their empire or their birthplace; and so far from deploring the absence of representative institutions, we must trace the orderly development, the disinterested policy of the empire to this exclusion of the populace, when we find so much to regret in their uncertain interference.

The townsmen of the great cities were an idle and theological mob, interested precisely in those

insoluble problems which delight the child and the savage. Fickle and spasmodic in their political interest, they betray no knowledge of affairs, no sympathy with the difficulties of a ruler, on whose shoulders they put the whole burden of government. The Nika riots, which seemed likely not merely to end the dynasty of Dardania but to herald the dissolution of the whole imperial system, found their counterpart in the other great capitals. Sedition, on pretext the most transcendental, personal, or purely frivolous, convulsed Antioch and Alexandria, and found material in the envious divisions not of sect merely, but of religion and of nationality. This breach, on what then seemed the fundamental and essential of life, was the chief cause of the dismemberment of the seventh century. It cannot in fairness be too often asserted that the spirit of the Gospel reinforced rather than weakened the empire; but the constant inspection of its dogmatic secrets was an obvious element of dissolution. It is not easy to overestimate the part played by this constant debate in opening the gates to the Infidel.

Eastern realm sharply divided, urban and rustic population.

The countryman, aloof from the prevailing absorption in the insoluble, continued his plodding way, unvisited except by the tax-collector, and leaving no trace in the record of historians. In spite of the admirable system by which the most distant parts of the empire communicated for imperial purposes with the centre, there was no real unity or uniformity, of creed, of culture, or of interest. There was ready intercourse with the capital, but little with neighbours. The decay of the township which set in mysteriously enough in the second century was by no means arrested by the reforms of the third and fourth. It may be presumed that the small occupier was almost completely ousted; and that while the great centres were thronged with the idle and unprincipled, a deathly stillness settled on the country, tilled by slaves or "colons" and spreading out more and more into large estates. How little the anxious

Eastern realm absorbs divided, urban and rural population.

sympathy and foresight of the emperors could effect to check these tendencies, we may gather from the acknowledged incompetence of statesmen to-day to deal with similar evils. Both parties in the State are fully alive to the growing evils which seem inseparable from an over-mature civilisation,—the desertion of the country districts, recruiting ground of arms and of health; the crowding of poverty, disease, and crime into unlovely suburbs of great commercial centres. But goodwill is powerless to cope with these evils; and above the benevolent schemes of small holdings or compulsory purchase hangs the veto of an irresistible law. We are less ready to blame the failure of older nations, when we are gradually but surely learning the lesson of the impotence of reason and conscious purpose. With the best intentions we press in vain against the force of circumstances which only a later generation can estimate; because before it lies the whole tendency worked out to its logical end, by some other power than that of man's device.

Problem.—was integrity worth while?

§ 6. Indeed nothing remains for those who criticise the later empire but the somewhat barren question, whether it was for the genuine advantage of the provinces and subject-races that this strange and largely unmeaning semblance of unity should be preserved at all? It is perhaps an unprofitable conundrum, clearly incapable of solution, to inquire if the day of the once precious protectorate of Rome had not passed? Yet it is one which must ever and again recur to the student of history. When we trace the heroic efforts of these rulers of alien race to enter into the heritage of imperial Rome and live true to its traditions, we are sometimes tempted to ask, was it worth while? Should not an epoch of disintegration have been allowed to succeed, in which might be formed and at last set free, a genuine national life in the several limbs, held so firmly and yet so artificially together by the empire? Now in the common censure of despotic methods, it is difficult in the

extreme to distribute the blame. Until quite recent times, it has been taken for granted that citizens, pining to be free fellow-workers in the fortunes of a State, have been held in chains to a tutelage, wholly mischievous and inopportune. But it is now contended with much greater plausibility, that a people usually deserves and creates its government,—and it is abundantly clear to-day that the revolutions which replaced autocracy in Europe in the nineteenth century were the work of a small knot of resolute and voluble Idealists, whose influence was of short duration and questionable value. The heterogeneous races which took their orders from Byzantium have at any rate not since shown that tolerant patience of routine and of opposition, which is the prime essential of successful self-government. And it is impossible to say whether the centralised authority of Cæsar produced these nations of slaves intermittently disorderly; or whether this very temper made necessary and justified, first the unwilling encroachments of Cæsar upon local liberties, and lastly, the entire system which kept the reluctant team in the leash. It is certain that Constantinople did not arouse the same warm feelings as we find expressed in the eulogy of Aristides in the second, or of Rutilius in the opening of the fifth century. Finlay, with amiable inconsistency, overrates sometimes the hatred of the Byzantine oppressor, sometimes the blind devotion of the provinces to the capital and the system. Yet it may fairly be said that the conception of the true remedy was to alter the "personnel" and not the system; and that wherever the calm judgment of the community found expression, it endorsed the principle and only sought to remove a representative who abused it.

No one perhaps at the present moment would venture to reproach Cæsar with denying a parliament to his realms, at one time the rough-and-ready panacea for all social evils. We are indeed interested to find that so far from interdicting assemblies for the discussion of local affairs and general welfare, the emperors

Problem, was integrity worth while?

were (as it might seem) the only persons who encouraged or suggested them. I am inclined to agree with those who see in the worship of Augustus in the provinces, a check and restraint upon the authority of the governor, by no means negligible; and a sound influence which, mainly no doubt religious, was also largely political in the best sense. It is impossible to deny the plutocratic basis of society in the Roman Empire: but it is difficult to prove that the rich oppressed the poor, or that the latter suffered by this nominal inferiority. Cæsar's officials at least might be chosen from any rank; and the burden rather than the honour of office fell on the "privileged" classes. The only definite proposal of self-government came from the advisers of Honorius, in the famous edict to the cities of South Gaul, about the close of his reign. There was certainly no fear of popular assemblies; or the delights of the circus would long ago have been suppressed. Indeed through many centuries the rulers fostered of set purpose that bugbear of monarchical or republican police to-day,—an idle and pampered proletariat. Yet the proposals for local responsibility met with no response; and the scheme of reform failed; not merely because it was applied too late, but because it was out of harmony with the people's requirements. I cannot attempt to explain the reason why the suggestion of a great Debating Council excited no enthusiasm in the highly civilised inhabitants of South Gaul; but it is worth while bringing the fact of their coldness before the notice of the over-zealous parliamentarist of to-day,—if indeed he is still to be found.

No seed of national freedom or power of self-government: alternative, chaos not autonomy.

§ 7. As to the suppression of nationality,—a charge often laid at the door of the empire, we must candidly confess that the conception is modern, and is perhaps not lasting. We have pointed out that the greatest systems or "objectives" that have swayed the world: Rome, the Church, Islam,—set themselves to abolish it as a narrow and unworthy prejudice, or to rise

superior in a loftier sphere. Idealists have regretted the break-up of Christendom or the Holy Roman Empire into jealous fragments. We are assured by the optimist that the resulting burden of militarism is destined to disappear, but we look in vain for any warrant for this pious hope. It is the essence of nationality and of patriotism to be exclusive and suspicious; though we may not grant with Mr. H. G. Wells that democracy spells ignorant war. An empire implies a central power, able to keep the peace among the feuds of race or of religion. A conquering caste, the Normans, the Ottomans, the Manchus, settles into peaceful civilian duties; forgets, it may well be, the manlier virtues of the camp and the field, but at least ensures peace among the factions. There is no sign in Eastern Europe and Asia at this time that there was either conscious desire or opportunity for national sympathies or national councils. That the unwieldy aggregate resisted the centrifugal tendency so often, and arose after each curtailment or deliquescence into a fresh integrity,—was due to the traditions and the appeal of imperial Rome, finding an echo in the heart of a Justinian, a Heraclius, or a Leo. I have no wish to magnify the debt which such restorers laid on their own or subsequent generations. It is quite possible that such rigorous welding together may have stifled some local aspirations, preserved some fiscal features of costly government in districts which would frankly have preferred to be let alone. But it is doubtful if such sentiments were ever expressed, or even consciously felt. A pacific civilisation implies costliness and centralisation,—two very obvious disadvantages, when it is remembered that the burden of taxation always falls in the end on the weaker and poorer; and that a centralised government cannot afford to allow them liberty in the single sphere which these classes can understand or pretend to influence. Yet if it be allowed that this blessing is worth all the sacrifice it entails, the imperial administration, in

No seed of national freedom or power of self-government: alternative, chaos not autonomy.

No seed of national freedom or power of self-government: alternative, chaos not autonomy.

refusing to surrender its dormant rights (as over Italy under Justinian) in resolutely forcing back into the fold the straying members, in struggling to recreate the antique ideal or its shadow against the pressure of outward circumstance,—was only performing its imperative duty, and being true to itself. The alternative was political and social chaos, not the emergence of free and self-respecting nationalities.

The interest of the meditative Asiatic lies elsewhere than in the humdrum routine of life. If they cast a glance at political conditions, they secretly approve the caprice and haphazard which places supreme power in the zenana or the vizierate, that is, in the alien and the slave. We have seen that this element of chivalry and hazard was by no means lacking in an imperial system; nay, it was often the source of rejuvenescence. But another side was a silent protest against this insecurity. The discipline of the civilian and the soldier, severed by the wise specialism of Diocletian's reforms, remained alike severe, precise, and methodical. It was upon the loyalty of its officers and the steady work of the civil servants that the empire depended for its stability during the frequent vacancies; interregna which in other elective monarchies, as Persia and the Papacy, have been scenes of disorder and permitted license. Wide as was the personal influence, great the initiative of the sovereign, the "republic" was not a prey to riot and plunder, because there was no visible director of its policy or champion of its laws. We must conclude then, as we have done so often before, that the system was adapted to the needs of its subjects and to their welfare, and that nothing else stood between a permanent chaos of racial and religious animosities. We have not been careful to apportion the blame for this lack of centripetal spirit in the dominions of the East; whether autocracy stifled local consciousness and effort, or merely arose because it was conspicuously absent. There may be those who regret the costly reconquest of Italy, and

perhaps of Africa, where some semblance of a modern nationality under a ruling caste was in process of formation; but we cannot withhold our sympathy and appreciation from the efforts of the seventh and eighth centuries, which without doubt secured Christendom and the promise of our present age from Islam. That this result would not have been attained by a wider welcome to the provinces to share the burden of government, is evident to any impartial student of the time. Whatever merit is due in opposing a rampart against the Muslim, belongs entirely to the narrow and conscientious circle of administrators; and in spite of the necessary power of a centralised bureaucracy, or of a standing army, the sovereign for the time found in them faithful instruments of a continuous design and purpose. And the sovereign himself in succeeding lost much of his own capricious individuality, and became an inheritor and a simple exponent of the undying policy of Rome.

No seed of national freedom or power of self-government: alternative, chaos not autonomy.

CHAPTER II

THE RESTORATION; OR, PERIOD OF CONQUEST AND CENTRAL CONTROL UNDER JUSTINIAN (527–565 A.D.)

The Dardanian House:

FLAV. ANIC. JUSTINUS I.	518–527 .	'prætor' nom.
FLAV. ANICIUS JUSTINIANUS I. (neph.)	527–565 .	birth.

Fabulous figure of Justinian: prevalent decay of Teutonic monarchies.

§ 1. THE reign of Justinian has been compared to a fortunate island in the midst of a raging sea. Its chronicles are full, its interests wide and its achievements conspicuous. No longer confined to the obscure intrigue of the palace, the student is taken from East to West in a rapid series of triumphs. Justinian himself belonged to the school of Tiberius. He never left the capital or commanded in person; it was "his settled policy not to abandon the seat of government"; *fixum . . . non omittere caput rerum.* But he controlled everything with minute, sometimes jealous care; and the victories of the Roman arms, the codification of Roman law, and the fortifying of the Roman frontier, must all be referred to his untiring initiative. During his long reign he never ceased for a moment to be the chief actor, the ruling spirit. Belisarius fought, Tribonian compiled, John the Cappadocian and Alexander the Scissors collected revenue, Solomon governed and built, Narses administered,—but throughout Justinian was the master. Yet we know the emperor only through the deeds of his ministers; the central figure is a singular mystery. It is clear that he left a very strange impression upon the men of his time and their immediate successors. His ascetic and secluded life, his sleepless vigils spent in deep metaphysical debate, his unwearied attention to cares of State, his

curious avenues of secret knowledge, his nightly pacing through the corridors of the palace (sometimes, it was alleged, carrying his head under his arm), the terror he could inspire in the officials of his closest intimacy, when as they gazed upon his face every feature seemed to vanish in dark red blur, and after an interval gradually struggle back into outline,—all these facts or fictions point to a genuine atmosphere of nervous mystery which surrounds, for us as well as for them, the greatest and the least known among Byzantine Cæsars. About him there was something supernatural and occult: we may dismiss the violent prejudice of the pseudo-Procopius, when he tells us that he was the "Prince of the Devils"; but we cannot doubt that he was regarded in an age gradually lapsing into superstition as an incarnation of "demoniacal" force. One-seventh of the whole work of Theophanes is devoted to his reign of forty years, though his chronicles cover five and a quarter centuries (285–812 A.D.); but we read only of the exploits of the emperor's lieutenants, little or nothing of himself. Even for the empress, with whose mythical childhood the Procopian memoir is so painfully familiar, the news is scanty and altogether incompatible with this record and with her alleged character; and it has been well pointed out that one who prolonged her morning slumbers till well-nigh noon, and her siesta till after sunset, could not have been a vampire, preying upon the life of the empire, and encroaching unduly into every department. The certain and historical resolves itself in her case into the bold decision to resist to the end during the Nika riots, and a charitable interest in an unfortunate class. Thus the history of the reigns of Justinian and Theodora is the history of his lieutenants; and the subjects' inquisitiveness that was never a personal loyalty satisfied itself with the same vague hints of horror that we find in Tacitus or with the more good-tempered gossip of Suetonius.

Fabulous figure of Justinian: prevalent decay of Teutonic monarchies.

When we turn to foreign politics, the first half

Fabulous figure of Justinian: prevalent decay of Teutonic monarchies.

of the sixth century marked the early dissolution of the barbarian monarchies in West Europe. The victories of Belisarius and Narses were perhaps already won, at least ensured, in the languid society of court intrigues, which ruined Vandal and Goth alike, in the failure of the compromise between the two nations. The barbarian protectorate was singularly short-lived as a political expedient; it implied just that dangerous "dyarchy" which had caused trouble and ill-will in the earlier empire. In Italy, there was the Roman Senate with its immemorial traditions and that curious provincial autonomy and dilettante Hellenism which it enjoyed and displayed since Diocletian. Opposed to the Arian belief of the dominant caste was the steadfast orthodoxy of the rising papacy. There was political and religious disunion, as well as the discontent of warriors who found their king (like another temporiser, Alexander) too much inclined to conciliate the more cultured and critical part of his subjects, and to imitate the absolute methods and prerogative of the emperor. It must be remembered that a barbarian monarchy on classic ground implied the reversal of all barbarian ideals. Wars of aggression were sternly forbidden; the *comitatus* had to be content with an honourable title and ample leisure. The king became, in addition to his dynastic claim to a nominal supremacy, a representative not merely of the conquered peoples, but also of the vanished and absentee Cæsar. While he could not satisfy the greediness and discontent of his own peers, he could not disarm the suspicion of those whom he did his best to protect. Historians complain of the reconquest of Italy, that it made a desert and disappointed for thirteen centuries all hopes of Italian unity. But it is easy in a laudable admiration of the great Theodoric, to see permanence and stability in an entire system, when the success lay solely in a single commanding yet tactful personality. It is difficult in the later wars to withhold our sympathy from Totila Vitiges and Teias. But it is

evident that such characters were exceptional: they rose to power only when the stress of conflict demanded and brought to light the best man. In the anomalous system of Teutonic royalty which clung to a family, without recognising the right of the eldest son, they had no chance except in these moments of peril. The ruling stock, which it was sacrilege to thrust aside, had become degenerate both at Carthage and at Ravenna. That the wars of restoration inflicted serious mischief cannot be denied; that the political system, which they replaced at such dreadful cost, had the seed of peaceful and prosperous development cannot be maintained.

Fabulous figure of Justinian: prevalent decay of Teutonic monarchies.

To go to the root of the matter;—it is never possible to settle the age-long dispute between the Realists and the Nominalists of politics. To the one, supreme value lies in the Church, the Empire, the State—in the objective and ideal, that is to say; and the welfare of the whole is too often measured in the aggregate by the dignity and wealth of the centre, which seems to entail the atrophy or the conscious distress of the limbs. To the other, all wideness and vagueness of scope is abhorrent; the sole and genuine test must be the happiness and comfort of the individual, the freedom of the citizen; or at least of the smallest and narrowest group which the statesman condescends to recognise,—the family, the manor, the parish, the commune. If the central authority drain the vitality of these for its own unknown purposes; if it sacrifice ruthlessly the constituent members in war and commerce, with the sole consolation of being an unhappy part of an imposing whole,—it stands condemned. We but lately contrasted the grandeur and effectiveness of Russian foreign policy with the misery of the famine-stricken peasant. We may well understand that the outward glory of Justinian's reign concealed a similar weakness, unease, and discomfort. But the reconquest might well have suggested itself as a plain duty; and it is difficult for rulers, whether monarch or multitude, to

Fabulous figure of Justinian: prevalent decay of Teutonic monarchies.

abandon schemes of vain or mischievous ambition and to apply industriously to petty detail and the welfare of persons. We can forgive Justinian's mistake, if mistake it was; the empire to Cæsar was a solid and integral whole; the recovery of lost provinces was a recall of subjects long neglected to the joys of civilisation, an enforcement of undoubted rights, never explicitly abandoned. Of no great undertaking is the age which undertakes and achieves an impartial witness; for in achieving it must suffer.

We have again and again occasion to mention the blindness of the most sagacious politicians on questions of immediate interest; and the historian who passes verdict on the worthies of the past, is often an incompetent judge of the duties and of the tendencies of his own day. Politics must be largely a science of opportunism; and its chief maxim is, "Do the next thing." To-day the number of certain aims and principles has grown alarmingly scanty; and the great disputes range round the question, how far are the sacrifices to Imperialism to be justified?—Our recent war in South Africa destroyed for an Ideal the past fruits of civilisation and retarded their renewed life.—It is easy to point out the defects of Byzantine policy and administration. We may like Juvenal's schoolboys advise Justinian to deal a decisive blow at the rotten fabric of Persia,—that strange rival and foe of Rome, so often her close personal ally, her suppliant and humble friend. We may see to-day that a "scientific frontier" on the East might have spared the most populous and civilised part of Southern Christendom from the unceasing and unmeaning raids of Persians and Arabs, from Chosroes to Harun al Rashid. It is easy to point out the folly of achieving costly victories thousands of miles away, in provinces that would never repay the cost of maintenance,—while the capital itself (but for the "Great Wall" of Anastasius) stood at the mercy of any barbarian horde, who could effect the passage of the Danube. Easy too

to contrast the incongruous splendour of the triumph of Belisarius, the submission of Gelimer, the constant and ceremonious "infeudation" of converted princes as vassals of the empire, with the almost incredible panic of Constantinople at the close of the reign; the hasty fitting-out of slaves and domestics, the inglorious last success of the great general over a band of disorderly savages.

Fabulous figure of Justinian: prevalent decay of Teutonic monarchies.

§ 2. Yet the policy of the court is eminently intelligible. The integrity of the empire, unbroken, as we know by the insignificant event of 476 (which unified rather than dissolved), was an incontestable article of faith. The motive for reunion was in a great measure religious; it was not national sentiment, as in the Pan-Germanic or Pan-Slavic tendencies to-day; nor was it the mere pride of a ruler. The issue of the restoration might be unfortunate: the Italy of Alexander the Scissors; the Africa of Solomon no longer garrisoned by Vandals and exposed to the Berbers. But the initial enterprise is dignified and Roman; a deputy had proved inefficient and mutinous, and a Catholic people sighed in their bondage to Arian persecutors. And no secret of political advance or national unity lay with the foreign protectorate. It was, as we have asserted, out of sympathy with its own followers and the classic nations which it essayed to govern justly. The new position was indeed quite anomalous. While the king aspired to the double dignity of barbarian king and Cæsar's delegate, he failed to enlist the loyalty of either party. It is perhaps significant that the most successful of barbarian royalties was the earliest to conform to orthodoxy, and the most obsequious in recognising the distant suzerainty. The Frankish king accepted the Catholic faith just a century before it occurred to Recared of Spain to proscribe Arianism, and yield to the influence of the Roman Church. The Lombard dominion in Italy received a new lease of life, after they had made peace with the Pope. Wherever this change occurred, it may be said to indicate much

Religious pretext for wars of recovery: Catholic and Arian.

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more than a mere personal conversion; it meant the permeation of Roman and Hellenic ideas, the advance of administrative centralising, the capture of the monarchy, still confined to a Teutonic family, by Roman influences; it implied subservience to central clerical authority at Rome. Frank and Visigoth and Lombard, in spite of this opportune alliance, showed unmistakable traces of decay, both in the reigning dynasty and in the entire governmental system of compromise. Ostrogoth and Vandal owed their much hastier exit to their Arianism,—implying, as it did, a complete divorce, not merely of religious but also of political feeling. That heresy might stand for particularism, for nominalism, for a compromise with Teutonic hero-worship; but in the Catholic faith was an air of finality and of unity, which ministered insensibly to reaction. We are dealing with religious questions in this volume, on the side only of their connection with political development; but it is permissible, indeed inevitable, to call attention to this fundamental difference between Arian and Catholic belief. The conversion of these nations to full orthodoxy marks a step not merely in their religious enlightenment, but in their political education, in their complete fusion with the conquered races. Justinian restored the empire, Catholic and centralised, in Africa and in Italy. He recovered some of the most prosperous cities of Southern Spain. Had the empire been less unwieldy, had his successors enjoyed leisure from pressing perils in East and North, the reoccupation of Spain might have become an accomplished fact; and it must not be forgotten that it was only owing to the invitation of an imperial officer that the peninsula was at last opened to the Arabs in the eighth century.

Scanty evidence on public feeling: agents withdraw themselves from control.

§ 3. The Annalists, and even Procopius, throw little light on the sentiments and secret motives of the time, whether in the policy of the Centre or in the public opinion of the subject. But it is not impossible to reconstruct a probable attitude of mind. A

permanent estrangement of the Western provinces was inconceivable. It was well known that Zeno had graciously accepted the insignia in 476. He had, some thirteen years later, commissioned Theodoric to punish an arrogant deputy, and occupy Italy in the name of the empire. The resumption of rights, indeed of full ownership, if the copyholder should "waste" his portion, was perfectly natural. Such "wasting" had indeed, as we have seen, taken place both in Africa and in Italy. In spite of her acute tendency to engross interest at the Centre, Constantinople was satisfied with a recognition of suzerainty over the more distant provinces; and the freedom and loyalty of Naples, Amalphi, Venice, Cherson, is a pleasant chapter in the annals of Byzantine despotism. It is not mere vanity that still included renegade provinces in the total of the empire; the Church of Rome has her system of prelates *in partibus infidelium;* what has once belonged can never be wholly lost. Nor was this century entirely hostile to local privileges and autonomy, as has been maintained; the supposed destruction of municipal liberty is an obscure transaction, and seems to be contradicted by the very evident desire of Justinian's immediate successors to consult local feeling, and to encourage local preference in the choice of administrators. So far as we can interpret public opinion (often most intense when most silent), the "Roman" world endorsed the policy of Justinian, without perhaps counting the cost. It is impossible for the vindicator of Byzantine policy to justify the system of finance; but it is equally impossible to explain, from any known figures, the oppressive incidence of a taxation in its general sum so moderate. With the best intentions, the revenue was collected with difficulty, and left a constant deficit. Yet it would ill beseem the citizen of a free State to-day to criticise too contemptuously, or pass judgment too harshly. We are on the point of overhauling the entire system of national finance. We are conscious of the unequal burdens, of vexatious

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inquisition, of the discouragement of enterprise by local injustice or extravagance, of the wanton mismanagement of amateurs, of the gradual extinction of the lesser middle-class, whether in town or country. Putting aside the common indictment of all centralised governments, the irresponsible venality of officials, there is little that we can lay to the charge of the Byzantines that cannot be re-echoed in modern times. Still, as ever, those who pay do not control; and the supreme voice in raising or apportioning national wealth for national purposes lies, as always, with those who directly contribute least. "Taxation without representation"; this, and not the pursuit of an imaginary ideal, has lain at the root of revolutions, which always betray economic rather than political origin. It is no new thing to-day, whether in England or in Russia, whether the discontent arise in the mind of a virtuous and hard-working middle-class or respectable "rentier," or in the stagnant intelligence of a sturdy proletariat. It will always be true: "*Quicquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi*," the great middle-class; between a vague and irresponsible multitude and a cabal of courtiers or of plutocrats. But no advocate can exonerate the Byzantine government from this grave charge—that it could not control or supervise its own agents; and whether administrator or revenue-officer was in question, malversation and petty oppression were only too common. Yet this tendency to extricate an office from such supervision is universal at this time. While we look in vain for any distinct nationalism, such as would separate from the empire, we see in individuals a well-marked centrifugal tendency. Feudalism is a curious union of the old patriarchal system, reinforced by the novel and perhaps selfish desire for irresponsibility and petty sovereignty. From the third century onwards this spirit is abroad. It culminates in the baronial independence under the Carolingians; the bureaucratic power under the Byzantines; the fissiparous emirates which divided and subdivided like sects in the Chris-

tian Church, the once integral Caliphate. The conquests of Justinian may be said to struggle in vain against a certain form of this centrifugal particularism. His administration, like that of Constantine or Theodosius, strove against the abuse of power in subordinate officials. It is easier, however, to acquire than to retain; and to conquer than to govern.

Scanty evidence on public feeling: agents withdraw themselves from control.

§ 4. We have traced some of the chief motives and principal results of the Imperial Restoration in the sixth century. The barbarian monarchies in a process of slow decay were unable to offer a final solution to any political problem. Certain conspicuous personalities, like Gaiseric and Theodoric, make one lose sight of the want of purpose or of merit in the protectorate. The difficulties began with its recognition. When these strong characters were removed, the seeds of decadence seem to ripen at once and bear almost immediate fruit. There is the same rapid decline in the Visigothic monarchy; in the house of Clovis barely a century after his death; in the caliphate, rent by civil war within fifty years after the Hegira; in the house of Charles, with whom the Caroline Empire may truthfully be said to begin and end. The recuperative powers and robust vitality of the "Roman" Empire throughout this period challenge our attention and our homage. A great concentration of force accumulates under a masterful will; but lasts scarcely longer as effective and operating, than the empire of Attila or of the Avar Khan. The empire saw their rise and decline, and outlived them all. It could not surrender its ecumenical claim; it drew the repentant provinces into the fold once more, and governed them with that archaic Roman system, which at least guaranteed to the subject a security of life and property elsewhere unknown; a justice, so far as the imperial will could enforce, steadfast and incorruptible; a freedom of commerce which in spite of obsolete prejudices and restrictions, made Constantinople the changing-house of the world's trade, a marvel of almost mythical riches, and the

Transient and personal character of the suppressed monarchies: conquest justified.

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goal of all the pirates: Avar, Arab, Russian, knocked in succession at her gates, happily for the pride of Western culture, in vain!—Still the empire preserved its traditional attitude of peace: and herein lay the secret of its longevity. Other political essays implied the momentary triumph of a dominant caste or a kingly family, or a single will, which ceased to be efficient in the very moment that its dignity was legally secured and transmitted. Everywhere else, institutions fell into premature decay: there was no principle or policy, no cohesion. The next four hundred years are for West Europe and the Arab Empire alike, a continuous retrogression, a return to the embarrassing simplicity of the primitive rudiments. Not that the ideals of unity or of Christendom, with its common aim, had disappeared or ceased to attract. But as so often happens in history, they were recognised only to be at once forgotten; like an orthodox lip-service, that repeats and enforces formulas, but will not trouble to translate them into practice.

Justinian, the Janus of his time, as he has been called, looks backward and forward. He is a pious restorer, and a daring innovator. But he is throughout true to the old Roman belief in a single empire, a single church. In spite of the heavy burdens which it imposed, his rule secured for the subject one chief aim of a civilised commonwealth,—peaceful development upon historic lines. In other nations law ceases to be a bond of union, and local custom and usage replace the uniform administration of a code. We must repeat that it is often hard to answer the question, who is the ultimate gainer in the complex and centralised government, to which all civilised society approximates? The unifying conquests of Justinian, the regular procedure of law, the incidence of a scheme of taxation, somewhat ill-adjusted indeed, but in theory and principle equitable, the rigid formula of Catholic confession,—seem to carry with them a heavy atmosphere of finality. And it may safely be maintained that while the world lasts, a

large number of men will prefer insecurity, hazard, and hope to the most consummate organisation. It is urged against the cold impartiality and justice of the British rule in India that it has taken the romantic element out of life. The citizen who returned to the empire under Justinian could forecast his future; the place of his children in the social hierarchy; the prescribed formulas of belief and of worship; even the necessary deductions for imperial taxes (though here perhaps he might find at times an unwelcome uncertainty). Elsewhere, separatism was rampant; and as a consequence, arbitrary caprice had free play. Where a modified success was attained in the art of governing (as among the Lombards of north and central Italy) a great debt was due to Roman traditions and the Roman Church. We may conclude, then, that the empire was justified in demanding the personal sacrifice of its subjects in the matter of taxation; in attaching once more to itself its scattered fragments; and in maintaining that preoccupation with peaceful pursuits and administrative routine, which so often seemed like culpable negligence. Yet while we desire to do ample justice to the motives, the industry, the success of Justinian in carrying on these traditions with unflagging hopefulness, we cannot disguise the weakness, whether the fault of circumstance or of design, which exposed the empire after his death to disloyalty within and wanton attack without.

Transient and personal character of the suppressed monarchies: conquest justified.

§ 5. The reign of Justinian is the age of great names and great achievements, vivid personal pictures, and biographies almost complete. But when the student endeavours to conceive for himself or portray to others the motives or the character, the aims and the policy of these actors, or to comprehend the period under some general formula, he finds himself confronted by insoluble problems, and forced to the utmost extremes of dissent and approval. He advances gaily and securely enough for some time, guided by a certain group of writers who offer themselves as

Irreconcilable features of the age: conflicting testimony.

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pioneers in a tangled forest; he is prepared to gather up his conclusions, when he is confronted with another set of witnesses, whose evidence he is unable to adapt into his plan. It is the custom for the historian, baffled and perforce inconsistent in his statements or his verdict, to take refuge in the hypothesis of a "period of transition." This universal excuse is perhaps more admissible in this reign than on most other occasions. Changes, not the result of deliberate intention or conscious power, were passing over human society. Pestilence, stealthy migration, hostile inroad, imperial welcome of foreigners, or a slow process of natural decay, well-nigh extinguished during this reign the ancient population of the empire. The archaic names and titles survive; but their wearers are of a different race, and have little understanding of the original meaning and implication of the offices they hold. Within the shell of the ancient fabric a new structure arose; and in the dearth of general knowledge, in the admiration squandered, it may be, upon the prowess or the intrigues of persons,—it is impossible to do more than guess at the actual issues slowly but certainly working under the artificial excitement and glitter of the surface. The generalisation of one path of research must be hastily withdrawn by testimony equally authentic which carries one steadily against an earlier conviction. And the historian cannot help creating on the reader's mind the same impression of helplessness and irresolution, which the epoch has somehow left upon his own.

Finlay, the most gifted and eloquent of English chroniclers of this reign, and the deepest student of the obscure tendencies which are gradually supplanting in interest the records of camp and court,—displays here as elsewhere erudition, sympathy, insight, and political acumen. Yet his pages are crowded with anomalies and inconsistencies; and within a few lines the verdict on the same evidence is reversed or suspended, the judgment on matters of fact or

behaviour contradicted without shame or excuse. Earnestly candid, scrupulously patient and honest in his detail, generous and sympathetic in his estimate of long-past men and things, he is utterly powerless (and doubtless through no fault or negligence of his own) to present us with a convincing picture of the time. Justinian, the genial and accessible, is also the "Mystery of Iniquity," the "Prince of Demons," the obscene "Dweller on the Threshold"; Theodora, the incomparably corrupt, is the devoted wife of an austere and simple husband; and is known outside private correspondence and secret memoirs, as the brave defender of a throne, the untiring ally of misfortune, the determined foe to official wickedness. Now, in our treatment of provincial matters, we seem to approach the final dissolution of the artificial framework of empire; everywhere the hatred of the central power and the government, and the rapid formation of effective local centres and new corporations, heralds the approaching detachment of the several units into novel and independent organisms. And again, the slow and determined process of centralisation goes on its way like the Car of Juggernaut, crushing autonomies, closing schools, persecuting heterodox, confiscating municipal revenues, forbidding the use of arms, and striking deadly and irretrievable blows at all local freedom and institutions. Greece in particular is alternately represented as full of impotent hatred and defenceless decay, and as showing every sign of prosperity and good order. Now his favourite encomium, safety of life and estate, and equity of administration, is still the undisputed title to the general esteem of the subject; and again, venality and cruelty in the official world, the heartless grinding of the poor, and the determined "war against private wealth," or the least trace of noble independence,—constitute all through the Roman dominions a sufficient pretext for the "general hostility" felt towards the "Roman administration." The bureaucracy carefully built up by Diocletian and Constantine

Irreconcilable features of the age: conflicting testimony.

Irreconcilable features of the age: conflicting testimony.

against the violence of the soldiers and the caprice of an autocrat, now appears as the sole guarantee of order and the friend of State and subject alike; now as a "distinct nation rather than a privileged class," with interests, hopes, and aims utterly at variance with the welfare of the citizen. While they are recognised to be the "real nucleus of civil society in the Roman world," the people aloof and antagonistic "stand completely apart from the representatives of Roman supremacy . . . in a state of direct opposition." The number of functionaries taking their orders from the capital can now be conceived as costly and overwhelming, no less venal and incompetent than the bureaucracy conceived by the irreproachable middle-class regimen of Louis Philippe, and bearing the same outrageous proportion to the number of impoverished citizens who lag outside the magic circle of "administrative right." While on close inspection, we find a careful supervision maintained over this "corps" of functionaries;—their limit is frequently fixed by imperial decree; and if we may rely on the figures given, we must allow with a sigh that the Romans far outstripped modern rivals in the art of cheap and effective control with the least possible waste of men and material. At one time we see in Justinian's abolition of schools and consulate, the jealous tyranny of a despot, striking at the memories of the past with colossal vanity, like the Egyptian Rameses, so that his own name alone may appear upon a heap of ruins. At another, a wise and kindly prevention of an extravagance which pressed heavily either on individuals or on the State, and an economical endorsement and recognition of facts, by suppressing professors who could no longer command an audience:—who indeed like some favoured emulators to-day, drew golden salaries for preserving a discreet or enforced silence. Sometimes the whole financial system of Justinian seems to us a gigantic blunder, and we know not which to blame the most, the costly and needless extravagance of his public works, or the futile in-

Irreconcilable features of the age: conflicting testimony.

consequence of his fiscal designs, or the incredible rapacity of his agents whom he encouraged, or at least failed to control. Yet from other sources, we know that he set before himself the ideal of a simple life, that he was careful and saving even beyond his predecessors, and managed to effect without serious disturbance of commerce or interference with individual rights, enterprises and conquests for which his ministers prophesied only disaster and ruin. Now, the emperor appears as an inopportune successor of Trajan in a bold and aggressive policy, as "lifting" (in Ammian's picturesque phrase) "the horns of the military caste," and wringing taxes from the poor to sustain a policy of costly "Chauvinism": at another, he is summoned before the bar to receive sentence for starving the army, for jealousy of the commanders, for halved or belated pay, for preference for that civilian office which in its new Chinese pride demanded the humble obeisance of the staff-corps at the imperial receptions. Even the mission of Alexander the Logothete to Italy may be depicted as extorting the last farthing from a country already ruined by civil war; or as wisely putting an end to lavish expenditure, reducing the troops of occupation, and abolishing the useless pensions which, with the corn distribution, turned highest and lowest alike into the paupers of the imperial bounty. Once more, in military matters is Justinian a heartless victor at the cost of innumerable lives and the devoted loyalty of an ill-requited friend? or is he the continuer of that especially Byzantine policy of wise and humane parsimony which reposed the safety of the empire, rather in defensive measure than rash hazard, rather in a careful system of forts and palisades than in the constant heroic exposure of the troops on every provocation?—And in this connection let us pose a question not of judgment but of fact; how was it that the splendid chain of northern fortresses offered no check to the marauders of his last years? was the scheme carried out at all, as in Africa we know it to

Irreconcilable features of the age: conflicting testimony.

have been, by the magnificent reliques of Solomon's masonry, or were the guard-houses emptied of their necessary garrisons?—And again, in the abolition of local councils, militia, and franchise, can we detect the true motive or measure the extent of this gratuitous crusade against tradition? Is it envy or economy, or a wise provision against tumult, such as raged in his own capital in the "Nika," and almost overturned the throne? or is it a necessary step in centralising all effective forces under a single (and that a *civil*) command,—which is confessed to be an indispensable measure for the safety of the civilised State in modern times? May not the vague complaints, which our historians repeat, of the wanton destruction of local liberties, be due perhaps to the malignity of "Procopius," when he might attribute to the direct policy of Justinian the Hunnish overthrow of the Hellenic municipalities in the Crimea, which indeed occurred in his reign, but for which he can only remotely be held accountable?

Simple and conscientious energy of J.: malevolent witness of disappointed placemen.

§ 6. This section is by no means an ungrateful indictment of the mental distress or incompetence of the great and generous Hellenophil, to whom Byzantine studies owe so much.—Some, indeed, of the problems posed will not be found in his pages or are rather implied and suggested there than placed in naked contrast. Finlay is not the only writer who cannot make up his mind, whether Roman rule at this stage in human development was a boon or a curse to mankind: and every earnest inquirer must confess that a study of this period, beyond any other in Roman history, leaves him dizzy and baffled, fatigued by the endless and futile task of reconciling the competing testimony. In the last resort, we shall find our verdict both of character and events, according to a personal bias in favour of autonomy or centralisation. Our view of men and things must in the end be *subjective;*—perhaps more so in dealing with the problems of Justinian's era than in surveying the revival of

Heraclius or of Leo, the wars of Basil, or the feudal triumph of the Comnenian clan. I must then, while freely confessing my inability to conceive or to portray the age as a whole, reconciled and self-consistent, offer my reasons for passing a favourable judgment on the personal character and the political wisdom of these two famous rulers.

Simple and conscientious energy of J.: malevolent witness of disappointed placemen.

I conceive that both Augustus and Justinian have suffered from the peculiar and unique air of majesty, with which their durable achievement and consummate success have enshrouded them. We are apt to think of Augustus, not as the homely and simple man of business, clothed in homespun garments and begging for votes like any other candidate, but as the inaccessible sovereign, founder of an almost endless series, author of the proudest of earthly titles. We read back this posthumous splendour till the rays of Byzantine, German, and Russian Cæsars converge in a focus and dazzle our eyes. Justinian too has been enthroned by jurists in a serene and matchless dignity which we are sure he never enjoyed. That tendency to regard the great ones of the past as a superhuman race and to exaggerate their foibles and anomalies into something of the "monster," has been fatal to any correct or sympathetic estimate. We have endeavoured to portray to ourselves, to heighten the dramatic interest and thrill, a colossal figure or *genie* of Arabian Nights; and our ideas are largely imbued with the foolish and superstitious prejudice of the Procopian writer. But if we try and move away the curtains from the draped and sinister figure, we shall find another simple and sedulous chief magistrate, who is neither the "empurpled Nihilist" of Hodgkin, nor the "merciless reformer" of Finlay. In his voracity for public business, he reminds us of Philip II.; and he had unfortunately one further department of curious inquiry which was closed to the orthodox mind of the Spanish king, in the theological discussions,

Simple and conscientious energy of J.: malevolent witness of disappointed placemen.

which kept him up night after night unguarded with grave churchmen. Hypatius and Pompeius were slain by the soldiers after the "Nika"; but Justinian himself shows that humane and forgiving disposition to personal foes, which after Phocas will desert Byzantine annals for two hundred years, only to shed lustre again on the striking contrast of Eastern and Western methods in the tenth century. His behaviour to Vitiges and to Gelimer is on a par with the most generous instances of later chivalry; and he pardons the clumsy conspirators who in 548 tried to profit by his well-known dislike of a military retinue and his passion for metaphysics;—with which, it may be, he consoled his solitude and bereavement after Theodora's death in the same year. We cannot withhold our admiration from his attached loyalty to his prefect, the "infamous John of Cappadocia." He tries to protect him from the keener insight and well-deserved indignation of Theodora; he leaves the sentence to the Senate; and recalls the tonsured criminal from exile on the empress' demise. We may accept the constant warnings of Laurentius that Justinian knew nothing of his minister's cruel oppression. Some will aver that he was not ignorant, but wilfully indifferent to the methods employed, so long as the money was forthcoming. But there are not wanting in other quarters signs of Justinian's limited ability, which while it hindered him from reposing implicit trust in an absent general, made him at times the victim of an unscrupulous attendant. And here we may perhaps notice an injustice to his partner.

Historians, able to detect the simple character, the occasional indecision, the innocent vanity and kindliness behind the traditional lineaments of the autocrat,—have yet set down his errors to the influence of Theodora. Yet is not her wise and firm intervention at two signal crises the best testimony both to her character and policy? Theodora determined to remove John from an office which he disgraced,

from a sovereign's confidence which he abused. We admire Justinian as a man for his kindly feeling for the fallen vizier; but the palm of statesmanship must be given to Theodora. And beyond the negligible rancour of the *Anecdota*, what authentic proof have we of her mischievous and haughty interference? Theodora indeed would to-day be termed a social reformer and a firm and outspoken friend; and that she humbled the pride at her levees of some office-holders and magnates of the capital, cannot stand seriously to her discredit with those who read between the lines, as to the character and merits of the official class in the sixth century.

Simple and conscientious energy of J.: malevolent witness of disappointed placemen.

One might hazard, indeed, a likely conjecture, that the real grievance against these rulers was due to their forward foreign policy and their domestic economy. It would appear that the reign of the good old Anastasius was the "golden age" of a pampered civil service; and that the treasures of the realm were gradually accumulating in the hands of a small official class, uniting to shield each other and to restrict the central power. Now we have written in vain if we have not contrived somehow to elicit this fact; that throughout Roman and Byzantine history the enterprise and policy of the sovereign and the welfare of the State have been identical and synonymous. It is no secret that the reign of Justinian witnessed the decay of the civil service as a lucrative career, the emptying of the law-courts,—which might be said to have become, in a very genuine sense, "the Halls of Lost Footsteps." There is a certain similarity between Justinian and the great Chinese emperor Hwang-Ti, who built the Wall, destroyed the books, and persecuted the *Literati*,—just as his European successor spent enormous sums on the fortress-system of defence, closed the Schools, and curtailed the profits or abolished the sinecures of notaries and barristers. It may be that the whole obscure movement of opposition and disintegration under Justin II., ending in his melancholy

Simple and conscientious energy of J.: malevolent witness of disappointed placemen.

complaint and warning to Tiberius, was due to a determined effort on the part of the Bureaux to recover influence and gain. It is quite easy to interpret from pretexts of sound economy the new control over municipal Hellenic exchequers, the mission of Alexander to Italy (as we saw above), the stoppage of pensions rather than of salaries in the case of the Neo-Platonists, the substitution of a central garrison for the dangerous or intermittent patriotism of a local militia,—and (gravest indictment of all in the eyes of the classical and republican student) the ending of the consulate,—which, as every reader of the annalists knows, had become corrupted into a mere synonym for "largess," and may not inaptly be translated by the modern "baksheesh." Justinian refused to multiply comfortable offices; and I should trace to motives of economy the occasional and deliberate reunion of civil and military functions which Bury has so well elucidated. Justinian had two main objects on which he expended revenue: his agents may have extorted from reluctant penury, but at least he did not squander upon place-hunters and sinecures;—the recovery of "Roman" prestige, and the security of the frontier. That the one victory was deceptive and ephemeral, the other precaution to some extent ineffective, cannot be set down in his disfavour. We claim singleness of motive but not striking political intuition for the emperor, whose unwearying if somewhat misplaced devotion to public business deserves our wonder and approval. A solid phalanx of civilian resistance lay behind the "pacifist" speech of John the prefect, when he dissuaded the emperor from his transmarine enterprise. Yet it will hardly be maintained that it was the prefect and not the emperor who had at heart the real welfare of the people!

§ 7. But a still more difficult task lies before the apologist,—Justinian's treatment of the army and his generals. And I am here quite willing to allow the

justice of that charge (which is at the same time an excuse),—that the imperial vigilance, forethought, confidence and perseverance relaxed in the later period, which may be dated from his illness or from his bereavement. Two princes in the line of Augustus have been singularly unfortunate in their longevity: Tiberius and Justinian. The sword or the dagger which cut off the Cæsars of the third century in their prime, was kindly to their reputation; and Justinian reigned and lived too long. The "Nika" riots and their sanguinary settlement established absolutism in the capital, where Anastasius had humbly pleaded with his people; they mark, as has been well said, the "last convulsion" in the passage from classic to mediæval times. The turbulence of the *Demes* revived indeed in the next period of decline, and will be there noticed as they dispose of the crown and bestow an easy patronage on the sovereign. But the massacre of Mundus and Belisarius establishes for the lifetime of Justinian the central supremacy; "order reigns in Constantinople" as it reigned later in Warsaw. Undaunted confidence marks the second epoch (532–548), decisive measures without foolhardiness. But in the third (548–565) there is a sure and gradual relaxing of the tension, there is an atmosphere of mediæval gloom and ecclesiastical preoccupation. A conspiracy shakes his trust in men if it does not, as with Tiberius, spoil his humanity; his faithful consort leaves him; and the plague strikes him down among meaner victims. It were as well for his renown that he had not recovered; "*provida Pompeio dederat Campania febres.*" He had lost heart with his bodily vigour, and he is no longer confident in his mission. And it is to this period that we may without hesitation refer that general policy towards the defences of the empire; which, after Africa and Italy had been recaptured by his armies and the Mediterranean scoured by his fleets, had to depend for the protection of the capital itself upon private enterprise.

Firm maintenance of central control over army and civilian: increasingly corrupt 'mandarinat.'

In his earlier and more successful epoch when

Firm maintenance of central control over army and civilian: increasingly corrupt 'mandarinate.'

he was rather the pioneer than the creature of circumstance, Justinian had a double aim in relation to the forces of war. He was as determined as Diocletian or as Constantine to maintain the supremacy of the civil, that is the imperial, power over the military leaders, who had overthrown the stability of the realm in the third century. The danger was ever-present; for the army was the "residuary legatee" of any extinct reigning family,—as witness Jovian, Valentinian, and the successors not merely of Valentinian III. but of Theodosius himself. This fancied submission of the military element lasted just so long as the Cæsar was himself a competent general. Diocletian no less than Theodosius could boast that he bequeathed a stable throne, founded on the pre-eminence of a civil ruler and a civilian hierarchy,—that word (*civilis* and *civilitas*) which meets us with significant emphasis alike in the pages of Eutropius and of Cassiodorus. But events falsified this sanguine expectation; and the emperor sank as in other centralised monarchies, into the puppet of a palace-faction or a creature of the military caste. We have seen the various issue of the dissonant policy of East and West: Byzantium, as of conscious design and clear purpose, set itself with the lettered Mandarinat of China to thwart and control the element of force. It is still a disputed point, of the utmost interest to the political speculator, whether national welfare is better consulted under civilian or military régime. It may be suspected by some that the sleek and comfortable corruption of middle-class bureaucrats is not more wholesome for a people's morals than the overt supremacy of the war-lord of chivalry and of the sword. Byzantium, like China, made its choice and no doubt was largely indebted to this firm decision for its long spell of power; in the steady intercourse between capital and province, in the wise conclave of that central corporation, whose resolve, as Laurentius frankly tells us, it is the sovereign's business to ratify and endorse. This potent yet un-

obtrusive influence spared the records of the Eastern empire from pretorian riot, from Turkish mercenaries, from feudal particularism, and from the unlimited sway of palace-chamberlains. Yet this pacific and respectable body of senators and officials frequently needed the discipline of adversity;—and a privileged class had to be sharply reminded that they were not the masters but the servants of the State. A similar admonition must in modern times be extended to sober the conceit or limit the autocracy of elected bodies and of permanent officials. Nothing is more genuine and instructive to-day than the singular and mutual distrust of elected rulers and the electoral people. Few words sound so ominously in the ear of the advanced politician as "referendum"; and there are few classes of the commonwealth studied with more critical suspicion and dislike than the representative assembly, and the authentic spokesmen of the people's will.

Firm maintenance of central control over army and civilian: increasingly corrupt 'mandarinate.'

§ 8. In the last three reigns the autocracy and all it meant was captured by the civilian element; an emperor of spirit had to resort to stratagem to make an odious tax impossible for the future; we must suspect that the praise of "our mildest and most gracious sovereign lately deceased," Anastasius I., was not wholly disinterested in the mouth of Laurentius the Lydian. It was clear that the two elements in the State could not work together as valuable yoke-fellows, unless the emperor occupied an unquestioned position of pre-eminence above them both. Leo I. had relieved himself of the embarrassing Aspar; but his successors, who scarcely quitted the palace (except as a fugitive, in the case of Zeno), had no sort of interest in the army, no control of the forces. The Chinese tradition grew up that the emperor must never leave his palace; and Justinian, while superintending the supplies or the campaigns of Belisarius, allowed another to reap the harvest of military popularity,—dangerous alike for the sovereign and the general. The decay of

Distrust of army in latter period well-grounded: inharmonious feudal elements: his merits.

Distrust of army in latter period well-grounded: inharmonious feudal elements: his merits.

the army, both in numbers and in spirit, until it was lost or annihilated in the dismal reign of Phocas,—was due as much to the *civil* policy of the successors of Leo I. as to the despondency and relaxed energy of Justinian's later years. The exploits of the motley hosts of Belisarius form an interlude of undisputed glory, in which both monarch and viceroy must have an equal share. But towards the middle of the century, Justinian resumed the suspicious attitude of a secluded ruler to an imposing force, which he did not personally control, whose exultation on the successful field might find vent in the disloyal shouts of "*Belisarie tu vincas!*" There is something strange and hardly Roman in the feudal retinue which followed this general; like a curious private body-guard of gladiators in the northern camp under Tiberius, 7000 attached personal servants looked to Belisarius alone for orders, and recognised in the doubtless "Teutonic" simpleness of their loyalty no vague allegiance to an invisible state or emperor. Here is the *comitatus* of the early German; and a premonition of the great armed households of mediæval barons, finding even a parallel in the trusty dependents of Basil, who in 963 placed by their means Nicephorus Phocas on the throne.

The great civilian officers hated and discouraged a warlike policy. They diverted the wealth of the province by a ceaseless flow to the lion's den of the central exchequer. In distant conquest John of Cappadocia sees nothing but an idle gratification of vanity or of honour. The etiquette of the court demanded the humble reverence of the military leaders to the prefect; and the composition of the army secured little respect in a corrupt and over-refined society. Something like the unnatural and long-fostered scorn for a soldier's profession existed among the wealthier and official classes. The half-barbarian allies, the art of war, and the tiresome renown of a great leader, were no better than

necessary evils. The recruits were rude and ignorant and spoke in strange tongues; they obeyed (like a mediæval army) their own chosen or national chief; and the danger of a united mutiny was averted, but the efficacy of a united army impaired, by the strange system of independent and divided commands. The mercenaries, as Procopius shows, formed the most effective contingent; and the emperor may have preferred the cheap reinforcements of tributary kings to the dearer sacrifice of his cherished tax-payers. They fought under their own chiefs and were uninterested in the person of the occupant of the throne. Indeed, as in the Italian republics, and under the Saïtic dynasty in Egypt, mercenary generals were preferred, partly because they threatened no revolution, partly because the foremost nobles preferred the less perilous service of the palace and the ministry; Narses and Peter are both Persarmenians, and the pages of Procopius bear ample witness to the alien birth of the chief defenders of the Roman Republic. It cannot be denied that in this most brilliant of aggressive reigns, a policy of anti-militarism was pursued. Pay (as in Eastern armies to-day) was rarely forthcoming; the commissariat (which still fell within the department of the prefect) was craftily dispensed, so that the real controlling power might be felt to rest with the civilian bureaux at the capital; and the army itself, as we have seen, was broken up into independent and unsympathetic battalions, at times quite irresponsive to the single will. It must be pointed out that the malicious envy and suspicion which thwarted the plans of Belisarius was by no means the work of a jealous and timid emperor. It was the outcome of the policy of the civilian hierarchy, which during the previous reigns had declined the officious barbarian protectorate, and aimed in the Juristic period, 200–235, many centuries before it was possible, at creating and profiting by a purely pacific State. The legislation of the time lays continued emphasis on the

Distrust of army in latter period well-grounded: inharmonious feudal elements: his merits.

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severance of class and interest: while the citizen is forbidden to bear arms and cannot throw off the responsibility of his station and well-defined duty, the military and the clerical element is discharged from taxation. Thus is there recognised that principle, pregnant with evil, and destined to issue in the French Revolution, which distinguishes with dangerous precision the rôles of the official and the tax-payer. The general character then of the Roman army under Justinian, amounting perhaps in all to 150,000 men, presents strange and anomalous features. Soldiers were brave, and generals were skilful; but there was no discipline; sedition was rife, and mutiny avenged on the government arrears of pay, retrenchment of supplies, and a wayward or niggardly system of promotion. It was small wonder that Justinian superseded, so far as was possible, these living but uncertain walls by durable stonework. These armies indeed which copy or anticipate the hazardous daring of Teutonic chivalry and resent the obsolete control and strategy of the legion, will give further trouble under his successors, and will disappear (to credit a current story) under Phocas. The reorganisation under Heraclius and Leo III. will follow different lines.—With this brief appreciation of the military problem which Justinian found and bequeathed to his heirs we must end our general survey of the reign. Even in this department the policy of the emperor must be held blameless, the difficulties well-nigh insuperable. Still does this epoch, in our judgment, deserve the tribute of Hase, with which we started; with all its weakness it has a serene and tranquil air which cannot be found in the previous or succeeding periods. And while all cohesive and centripetal influences seem suspended, and every class and order bent on violating the integrity of the State, the emperor, magnificent and isolated in his hard work and steadfast purpose, stands alone to represent the Roman unity. For this he laboured according to his lights, and without

counting the cost to himself or others. In an age which has witnessed the pathetic impotence of a benevolent autocrat to heal his country's woes, because the time and the society are out of tune, we shall not speak harshly of the efforts or of the failure of this most laborious sovereign in the whole Roman line.

Distrust of army in latter period well-grounded: inharmonious feudal elements: his merits.

CHAPTER III

SUCCESS OF THE FORCES ARRAYED AGAINST ABSOLUTISM; OVERTHROW OF THE EMPIRE (565–610 A.D.)

FLAV. ANIC. JUSTINUS I.	518–527	'prætor' nom.
FLAV. ANICIUS JUSTINIANUS I. (neph.)	527–565	birth.
FLAV. JUSTINUS II. (neph.)	565–578	birth.
FLAV. TIBERIUS II. CONSTANTINUS	578–582	adopt.
FLAV. MAURICIUS	582–602	adopt.
PHOCAS (or FOCAS)	602–610	milit. nom.

Rare instance of 'personal' momentum: nadir of Rome and murder of Maurice.

§ 1. IT is obvious to the most desultory student that the Roman Empire had to be founded anew in the beginning of the seventh century. The secret cause of the collapse of great systems, whether of Charles or of Justinian, is one of the most abstruse problems of history; and the latter case is specially obscure. Not seldom in Roman history we tremble on the brink of a catastrophe. What seems like pure accident alone wards off the fatal day; the cry of the geese on the Capitol, the sanguine temper of Camillus, the charms of Capua, the strange daring of the nervous Octavian, the clear sight of Diocletian, the sudden inspiration of Constantine, the spasmodic patriotism of Heraclius, the protestant and worldly spirit of Leo, and (to pass over several centuries and make generous allowance) the chivalrous influence of the house of Comnenus or Palæologus. But the hour of the most acute crisis may be fixed in the first and second decade of this seventh century. Heraclius is the "second founder" of the Eastern empire, with more indefeasible claim to the title than any other. We are at present concerned with the steps leading to this rapid decline. The institutions of Justinian stand before us a mere heap of ruins. The whole territory of government has to be reconquered and reoccupied.

Rare instance of 'personal' momentum: nadir of Rome and murder of Maurice.

The obscure and often puzzling annals of the Heraclians disclose dimly to us a new empire; military *themes* supplant civil *provinces* as areas of administration; the archaic and more genuine features of Roman rule have all but disappeared. It is often hard for the historical critic to apportion weight and value between personal and impersonal influences. We have seen how universal and how well justified is the suspicion now entertained of the former. But we may easily carry our deference to the Subconscious too far. Occupied in reading subtle changes in a people's life, in tracing subterranean economic currents, we distrust the vociferous and voluble motives and policy of statesmen. We believe that even the most sagacious is carried like the rest on a stream, which he illustrates but does not control. Yet even in a modern State, the personal equation counts for much; the accidental interview; the change in a strictly constitutional throne; the tactful and sympathetic message or visit of ceremony, the appropriate birth or love-match which brings the throne and the first family within the simple understanding of Democracy. Power and influence, it is true, have been dissipated and weakened, when extended over a vast multitude; but this ultimate source of authority is but rarely found acting in unanimous concert or with any certainty of aim. Nor have a people's ministers a monopoly; great issues are still to-day decided in the depths of a palace or a zenana; the "high politic" of Europe is sometimes settled in a Tyrolese shooting-box. Now it is impossible not to connect the downfall and the peril of the Roman Empire in that age with the murder of Maurice and the grotesque and fatal accident that carried Phocas to the throne. Maurice had restored the king of Persia to his kingdom; and the grateful sovereign was bound to him and his house by very genuine ties. The brutal murder of his benefactor, the extinction (as it was supposed) of his line, set Chosroes on a policy in which ambition and vengeance bore perhaps an

Rare instance of 'personal' momentum: nadir of Rome and murder of Maurice.

equally mingled share. The signal weakness of Rome in the absence of the dynastic principle was here displayed. Chosroes was the friend of Maurice and not of Rome; and all sense of obligation to the Roman republic or Roman army was overwhelmed in his passionate desire to retaliate.

The inert monster raised by a freak of fortune offered no resistance; he never issued forth to protect his capital; and the beacons of the Persian host might perhaps have been seen by the more venturesome outposts of the Avars. The provinces refused homage, and Heraclius the elder, a curious but more fortunate parallel to the elder Gordian, withheld with impunity the tribute and corn owed to the expensive helplessness of the pauperised capital. The sole records of a reign passed over by chroniclers in shamefast silence, are murders of the partisans of the previous reign,—of that entire adoptive system which from Justin II. (565–578) to Tiberius II. (578–582) and Maurice (582–602) had struggled manfully against the general decay, and what is stranger still, the general disaffection. It is perhaps fanciful to reconstruct the result of the peaceful abdication of Maurice, the elevation of Germanus or Theodosius. But we may safely affirm that the whole fabric of empire would not have collapsed; and that no impassable chasm would separate the age of Heraclius from his predecessor. The continuance of the Maurician line might have preserved Rome and Persia from the needless conflict; which reflected indeed a transient glory on the new house, but at the same time opened the heart of both kingdoms to the fanatics of Arabia. It was no regular process of decomposition that all but ruined Rome, but the paralysis of the central power under Phocas, and the hatred of Chosroes, which found colourable pretext for an aggressive war in the pursuit of filial vengeance.

Forces of disintegration and dissent.

But having done justice to the personal and largely accidental element in the crisis, we cannot overlook the hidden tendencies, which in Persia as

in Rome alienated the sympathies and interests of subjects and sovereign, and made both realms an easy prey to foreign invasion. It is clear that after Justinian the "Romans," unaware of their debt to the central authority, resented control and allowed the monarchy to continue on sufferance. The single test applied by a pampered body of irresponsible critics was success; and the latter years of the aged emperor had shown the weakness and despondency that lay behind the imperial pretensions. *Forces of disintegration and dissent.*

Under Justin II. and Maurice the northern barbarians hung like a storm-cloud over the capital, and with the sense of insecurity, the discontent grew among those who had long ago surrendered every privilege, save the right of passing captious sentence on their rulers. There was abroad a sense of impending ruin, of coming catastrophe; Maurice for his piety is given the choice of suffering the penalty of sin in this present life; Tiberius is saved from the wrath to come, and the judgment is delayed for his sake. It was felt that the blow had fallen with Phocas; and the seventh century will witness a great moral recovery among the people of the capital; just as in the eighth a kind of Protestant Asiatic reaction gives back some of the blunt and sturdy confidence of the old Roman character. But the history of the last half of the sixth century is the record of a dissident aristocracy, an estranged public opinion, and rulers' best intentions defeated or perverted. For the system of Justinian, like many other carefully devised schemes, had grown old with its author and could not survive him. The empire had always taken a most serious view of its manifold duties and burdens. Since even the semblance of a dyarchy had been abolished in the fourth century, there was no restriction to the prerogative, because there was no limit to the responsibility. An honest ruler could not divest him of this responsibility. As we have often noted, there are no *rois fainéants*, no mikados in the imperial line. We are still divided

Forces of disintegration and dissent.

to-day on the question of the proper function of government; and it is idle to condemn either the performance or the motive of those who were confronted with the urgent duties of reconstruction and defence. The emperors entertained a profound distrust of their own agents. To commit the task of supervision to the subject, as we endeavour to do to-day, might well appear to them a cowardly and a dangerous measure. We are here face to face with a very real problem—that of sustaining a healthy interest and a strong vitality in public concerns without sacrificing discipline and continuity, without opening the fundamentals of the State to the attack of a noisy and unanimous minority. Historians with democratic bias may assume that all stir is life; and may condemn a government for believing that to maintain order is its primary duty. The empire was fundamentally and confessedly defensive and conservative. Few, if any, questioned the ultimate and ideal character of its institutions or of its religion. In the happy coalition of Church and State, the identity of interest in Christian and in citizen, men fancied they had reached the final and perfect form of human society. And this belief continued triumphant even among the dark clouds and obvious and sinister prophecies of the sixth century.

But this unalterable form of government involved autocracy and depended for its success on the personal vigour of the autocrat. We may well doubt if the inhabitants of the great centres known to us only for turbulence in the circus, for subtlety in metaphysics, were able to form a correct view of a political crisis or take measures for the welfare of the State. What is clear is that they never claimed this undoubted privilege of the free; and that they were contented, as in the past, to delegate their rights to the emperor. Centralism can scarcely be avoided where an artificial system (and in many respects an empire is always artificial) holds together by a network of tact or of force a variety of races and creeds. There was

rapid and easy intercourse with the capital: but communication was infrequent and constrained between the several provinces. We are brought round once more to the insoluble problem: was it worth while to defend and hold together this unwieldy aggregate? to value order above liberty, traditional routine above spontaneous initiative? If we incline in any degree to applaud the imperial policy, if we waste no regrets on the tutelage of peoples perhaps for ever unsuited for self-government, we must acquit Justinian of error; he could not have done otherwise. If we grant that the vigilant supervision of civil service and of army is the duty of the sovereign and not of the nation at large, not merely his policy but his method was commendable. Perhaps to the "Roman," the distinction would have been unmeaning. Cæsar was elected to be the representative of the people and to save them trouble, to feed and police them, to watch over the governors and officials, who were at best a necessary evil. And yet it is easy to see what danger lies in this tranquil surrender of duties and responsibilities to other shoulders. The vigorous and disinterested monarch finds no genuine successor; power falls into the hands of pedants or court-favourites; the army, even more necessary to pacific and defensive States than to militant and aggressive, is reduced and starved; and the people, unused to public cares and charges, becomes incapable of the smallest effort at self-defence.

Forces of disintegration and dissent.

§ 2. The counterpoise to the excessive power of government is found in various sections of the body politic. The seat and character of this "Ephoralty" will vary with the temper and traditions of the people. Hegel, as we have already noted, passes by with contempt the sounder prejudice of Fichte. Absolute power is no less mischievous in a number than in a unit. The manifold duties of government have been seldom exercised by one man, never by a million; and the sole difference between a nominal autocracy and the most unrestricted freedom lies in the spirit of the

No 'ephoralty' to guard people from uncontrolled centralism: services of feudal nobility.

No 'ephoralty' to guard people from uncontrolled centralism: services of feudal nobility.

intermediate group who administer, who control and create (or pervert) public opinion. It may stand out as a distinct class or official hierarchy over against the mass of the people; or it may rise from it and merge insensibly in it again.

The faculty for genuine self-government is gauged in this way; if administration is largely in the hands of amateurs who conceive public business as a necessary episode in the life of every citizen, and not the special duty of an expert caste. *Ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἐν μέρει*, is alike the maxim of the free Hellene and the modern Anglo-Saxon. Either will lay aside, without complaint, a rôle which he is at any moment at the bidding of his fellows prepared to undertake again. In nations "born for slavery" the official remains always an official; and the functionary seems to spring from an altogether different stock, to be made of another clay. The advance of a nation towards true political freedom is tested by this easy transition from office to private life. If the line of demarcation between rulers and ruled is hard and steadfast, no great purpose is served by changing the label of government; the people remain equally inert and dependent upon a court, a feudal nobility, a bureaucracy, or a powerful and perhaps unrecognised mercantile committee. The increasing complexity of government in modern times, the growing rivalry of nations, the needful secrecy of movement or offensive invention, the vastness of imperial aggregates—all this has worked mischief with genuine democracy and the pretensions of the people to direct control. The average modern citizen is both ignorant and dependent,—in spite of the press and the wide franchise which seem to equalise all men. The central government is no less than under Justinian, a matter for experts; and although the ideal is still recognised,—easy interchange from office to privacy,—yet it becomes each year more difficult. Thus the character and "personnel" of the expert class becomes a matter of supreme interest alike for the citizen and for the

student of history. He will be more or less indifferent to the precise formula of government, and will look with pity upon the spirited struggles of the past century to change one master for another, to oust King Log to set up King Stork. He will find that liberty survives best, where public service is rather a natural but transient episode than a life-long profession; where there exists a class nurtured on hereditary traditions, which has no objection to office, and, from private retirement or recognised opposition, no hesitation in criticising the official world. In the "Roman" world the line between the official order and the mass was sharply drawn. There existed no outspoken and impartial class of landowners to act as a makeweight or counterpoise. But the rise of an independent influence has been detected with much ingenuity by modern historians. It is shown that the activity, the judicial firmness and military promptitude of the monarch, was thwarted and hampered by a dangerous rank which nullified the diligence of the three successors of Justinian. They precipitated the anarchy under Phocas and were only humbled by the degradation and weakness of the empire, for which they were largely to blame.

No 'ephoralty' to guard people from uncontrolled centralism: services of feudal nobility.

§ 3. The younger Justin was by no means a contemptible successor of his great uncle. His policy of bold resistance rather than ignoble ransom, was wise and dignified; but his malady and mental confusion made him the easy prey of courtiers, against whose wiles he warns his adopted heir in one of the most sincere and convincing speeches that antiquity has handed down, along with many mythical and academic harangues. The two following sovereigns show an apologetic attitude to the forces which silently arrayed themselves against the central authority. Tiberius II. relaxes discipline and squanders the treasures in an attempt to conciliate. He earned an unmerited fame for liberality when he was merely weak and short-sighted; and he handed down to Maurice a difficult task, with impaired resources to achieve it. Nothing

Justin's confession of his failure and its causes: arrogance of bureaux and mob: stern lesson of the next century.

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short of a crisis could cure the general disaffection. Long before Maurice refused to ransom the captives whom he suspected, perhaps with justice, of being merely renegades and deserters, the army was seething with mutiny. We have full records of the inconclusive campaigns in Thrace, and the nervous changing of the imperial generals, Peter and Comentiolus. Whatever the cause of the altered temper, whether personal dislike or general grievance, the army was insolent and undisciplined. The capital might conceivably have become the scene of a military tyranny, like that which disgraced Bagdad under the later caliphate and the Turkish troops. The Senate begged the emperor not to venture his sacred person in the field; and Maurice, unnerved by omens and gloomy looks, soon returns to the capital, though as a subject he had fought bravely in Persia. The official ring demanded that the emperor should remain in that seclusion which ensured his impotence and their power. The army despised the civilian sovereigns, and nothing but the extirpation of the "Roman" forces under Phocas, and the personal prowess and initiative of Heraclius, could save the State. The mutinous element was annihilated in that obscure and disgraceful interlude of eight years. The business of Heraclius was to create anew a loyal army, a patriotic Church, an effective administration. This task he performed in the silent and, as it seemed, slothful years of his first decade. The new monarchy is not the monarchy of Justinian, but something novel and original. By a salutary threat, he convinced insolent nobles and seditious factions that they were but the menials of a central authority which was in no sense beholden to them. The supremacy of Constantinople was artificial, and by no means definitely established. It had not yet assumed its recognised position as sentinel,—Warden of the Eastern Marches of Europe. The locality of the capital was not assured. From the time of Anastasius it had been regarded as unsafe; the latter years of Justinian had

shown the difficulty of defence without a strong Danubian frontier; and the reign of Phocas had been fatal to its prestige. The unexpected resolve of Heraclius sobered the Byzantines; but as we shall see, his family were never at ease in their midst, and his last descendant was the first Roman emperor who reconquered the capital by the help of foreigners.

Justin's confession of his failure and its causes: arrogance of bureaux and mob: stern lesson of the next century.

Here we anticipate the course of events; and have encroached, perhaps improperly, on the records and the policy of the African house. But we are compelled to judge of an obscure tendency by its undoubted issue in fact. The aristocracy that trembled before Phocas, the army that was crushed by incessant defeat and vanished without a trace, the Church which preached orthodoxy, but not manliness,—these were the malign influences which rendered futile the task of Tiberius II. and Maurice. Tiberius yielded to official selfishness and popular clamour. The idle demes believed themselves arbiters of the fate of the empire and the imperial line. The factions of the circus gradually resumed their sway, — and indeed monopolised political power and joined gladly in the revolution. Throughout this period of forty years, the capital, as the residence or the prison of the sovereign, drew to itself all vitality. The official class,—inseparable evil of orderly government, was corrupted by the general prosperity and by the deference and the complaisance of the emperor. An untimely severity, a want of judgment and tact, made the reforms of Maurice unpopular, and exposed the weakness of the fabric of government. The capital, in spite of its pride and bureaucratic tradition, cringed before the nominee, or rather spokesman, of a few disorderly soldiers. The wholesome influence of distant provinces put an end to the disgrace, and showed the malcontents their true servility and dependence. Nothing can be more obscure than the causes of this estrangement of sovereign and subject, of this selfish insubordination. But perhaps (as we noted at the outset of this brief

Justin's confession of his failure and its causes: arrogance of bureaux and mob: stern lesson of the next century.

survey of a critical time) more than in most important movements, personal qualities and defects were to blame. Had Tiberius II. been spared, he might have learnt the lesson of moderation, firmness, parsimony;—had Maurice been more considerate to classes long unused to coercion, had Germanus seized the falling diadem, had not Chosroes exchanged a lively gratitude for bitter hatred,—the history of the ensuing century would have proceeded on very different lines. Nevertheless, we may safely assert that the capital, with its mob and ruling classes, needed a severe lesson; it was not indispensable to Cæsar, but Cæsar was indispensable to it. The revival came from the provinces; and the hereditary principle, shaken by the elevation of Phocas the centurion, disused through many years of adoptive succession, is recognised once more as the secret of strength and stability.

Dissenters in all classes: religious divisions: peril of functionary and the corporation of civil servants.

§ 4. I may be pardoned perhaps for dwelling still longer on this eventful period of fifty years, with greater detail that can be usually permitted in this division of the work. The judicious reader will still insist on the advance of more certain evidence, to bear witness to the current of disintegration, at which historians darkly hint. Nor am I doing an injustice to the rest of the work, introducing a disproportionate study of a single brief half-century. For it is here especially that we can clearly detect the constitutional difficulties which beset the Roman throne;—the weaknesses which led to its final overthrow in the seventh century. A war in the East, the perils of the Danubian frontier, may be dismissed by the historical theorist in a sentence; but it requires all his acumen and his erudition to explain the change of Justinian's majestic and imposing fabric into a shapeless heap. It would be an error to suppose that any one class represented and monopolised the centrifugal tendency. In the highest and most perfectly organised corporation, the Church, there was the same internal dissidence, which we may notice in the Middle Ages, before the salutary and

sobering influence of the Reform produced the centralising Catholic reaction. Not yet had the menace of Arab fanaticism welded into a compact and patriotic whole the body of Christian believers and Roman subjects, at the costly sacrifice of the dissenting provinces. The seventh century will prove a startling contrast to the sixth; misfortune had taught the orthodox a much-needed lesson. The religious fervour and crusading spirit of a holy war reinforced Roman imperialism at a critical moment. But, if we had time or patience for a distasteful task, the latter years of Justinian and the reigns of his unhappy successors were distracted by that bitterest of human rancour—the theologian's hate. And a historian has some ground for the venturesome and suggestive statement that Nestorians and Eutychians desired to form separate States, and to cast away for ever the cords of Roman dominion. Indeed, we may conjecture that the loss of Egypt and Syria was no unmixed detriment to the State; and we have the later evidence of Paulician sectaries in the East, and Albigensian heretics in the West,—to prove that political anarchy can employ the disguise of religious conviction. But I must hasten past the noisy and yet metaphysical arena of ecclesiastical feuds; I shall endeavour to penetrate the feeling of the army, the demes, and the official class. It will be possible to show what were the difficulties, which Justin II., Tiberius Constantinus and Mauricius so manfully confronted; and even if religious belief and interest had united subject and ruler, reason enough for their ill-success will be seen in the rich harvest of disloyalty which was sown in the gloomy silence of Justinian's last years.

Dissenters in all classes: religious divisions: peril of functionary and the corporation of civil servants.

Justinus, the *curopalates*, ascended the throne with a full sense of the heavy task which lay before him. He was alive to the many abuses which crept into every department in his uncle's dotage. His eulogist, who gives us so vivid a portrait of the ceremonious accession of a Byzantine ruler, makes no

Dissenters in all classes: religious divisions: peril of functionary and the corporation of civil servants.

secret of the odium which slowly grew in those inactive years, and gathered with angry clamour round Justinian's nephew and successor. Justin himself is the first to acknowledge these shortcomings; "*nulla fuit jam cura senis; nam frigidus omnis Alterius vitæ solo fervebat amore.*" He endeavoured to seize the reins with a firm hand; he was bold before barbarian arrogance where his uncle had purchased a disgraceful immunity; he was tender to the subject in the remission of arrears or in actual diminution of imposts. He tried to enlist the sympathies and patriotic aid of the three classes which controlled the capital,—the Senate, the military leaders, and the demarchs; and like Honorius before him, encouraged again that local opinion in the provinces which circumstances rather than policy had led the emperors to stifle. I should prefer to trace the important concession to the bishops and principal inhabitants of the right to nominate their governors (Nov. cxlix. or v. ed. Zacharias) to a generous desire to consult local interests and revive a flagging patriotism than to any fear of vigorous particularism,—such for example as led Frederic II. in the West to recognise as an imperial favour what had already long been claimed and exercised as a feudal privilege. I can discover, indeed, much unreasonable and childish turbulence, in Church and in circus, but no clearly-defined defiance or policy of separatism. The movement which extends to all classes of society is essentially anonymous and instinctive; it is not articulate with legitimate demand for the redress of grievance; and it is clearer in this epoch perhaps than in any other, that the emperor represents the advanced and liberal opinion; and the public tone, the superstitious, the barbaresque and the reactionary. Here indeed, signally, the sovereign is the best man of his time. And we feel sure that exigence of State as well as religious intolerance (to which chief virtue of the age Justin, it would appear, was insensible) guided the curious edict for the conversion of Samaritans which heralded

their gradual extinction as a distinct nationality. We need not in this reign concern ourselves with the democratic factions of the Hippodrome; they will emerge in the next, and culminate in the catastrophe of Phocas' election. Nor indeed with the disaffection in the ranks of the army, which though slowly forming finds as yet no utterance and no spokesman.

Dissenters in all classes: religious divisions: peril of functionary and the corporation of civil servants.

The struggle of Justin II. is consistently maintained against a single class: the official aristocracy. While he endeavours to relieve the masses of an unequal taxation, he seeks to control under the uniformity of law a caste which arrogated a privileged and exceptional position. The empire was from the outset, just the denial of immunity; and the social inequalities which it was seen to create or to countenance by no means implied the evasion of the wealthy or official class from central control. It was rather invented in order that at any moment the emperor might know how and where to lay his hand upon the object of his search. Now if the evidence be carefully sifted for this bureaucratic claim for special treatment, we must confess it reduces itself to a story and a speech,—to which I have already alluded. Justin avows his own failure and admonishes his Cæsar to profit by his unhappy example; he points to the functionaries which surround his throne as the authors of his calamity. And although the story tells, in the fashion of the "Arabian Nights," of a prefect's rash promise to restore order in a given time, of a rich noble's contempt of authority, of an appeal to the emperor and his insistence on the execution of justice even if he himself be the culprit,—yet the legend tallies (like a similar tale about Theophilus) too closely with our guesses and intuition to be neglected. The powerful scorner of equity is either a *magister* or one "of the more prominent senators"; and it is clear that we must seek our greedy or oppressive criminals not, as in a later day, in the ranks of the landed gentry but among the official hierarchs. It is against these that the vague yet merited indictment of historians is directed; as

Dissenters in all classes: religious divisions: peril of functionary and the corporation of civil servants.

they deplore the curtailment of the autocracy in this period,—and the forces of dissolution and disorder, found in a "wealthy and influential aristocracy" and "turbulent and licentious nobles." The popular and equitable part played by Justin cannot be gainsaid; and the offer to submit the person of the legislative monarch to his own tribunals reminds one strangely of a similar proposal made by Decius in 250: when that reforming and antiquarian prince revived the ancient censor's office, to be a kind of ephor to bring prince and people alike to a sense of their duty. It may well be pointed out at this juncture to all who see a vindication of freedom in such-like vivacious sallies of contumelious defiance, that the final form of this privilege spells anarchy and revolution. The French king had conceded immunity and exceptional right in order to secure real control; the Russian monarch has evoked, in the civil service which thwarts and deceives him, a spectre which he cannot exorcise.

A monarch may be tempted to conceive that the best bulwark of his throne is a hereditary nobility, whose chief pride is to serve his household;—or a civilian officialism, which is entirely dependent on his word and favour. But the essential condition of monarchy is its truthfulness to its popular and democratic origin. Nowhere has kingship emerged in human history, except at the summons of the popular distress, often inarticulate or audible only to the detached yet penetrating historian in his library. Apart from a monarch no sound conception of the State has been possible,—a commonwealth in which all are equal. The striking and cynical immunity of the wealthy in the American republic is recognised by all; but it is seen by few that the war against privilege and abuse can never be carried on with effect except under monarchical institutions. It is by no means in an ironical spirit that Dr. McQueen of Iowa has lately urged the elevation of president as king to the throne of the United States; and his reasons are just those which in the sixth century led the wiser portion of an ignorant and

disaffected people to desire the *increase* rather than the *curtailment* of centred sovereign prerogative;—he arraigns the fallacy of "self-government" as to-day practised, and exposes the dangerous arrogance of the rich, peculiarly insupportable among the mocking formulas of free institutions.

Democracy gains nothing in freedom by exchanging bureau for feudal superior: civil service, both 'gaoler' and 'robber.'

§ 5. Nothing is more instructive and significant than the condescending and perhaps reluctant patronage with which Liberal statesmen and press-writers awkwardly conceal their astonishment at the modern revival of kingship. The reason is surely not far to seek; that in the general evaporation of the old shibboleths and old hopes, in the serious dilemma and dead-lock of partisan- or group-government, the eyes of all turn to the immemorial and traditional representative of equity and of unity. If any hasty student of a neighbouring republic seeks to adduce the contentment of France to-day against this plea, I would seek the strongest confirmation of my thesis in that very country. For the single principle which the French Revolution seriously proposed and genuinely understood was "equality"; and with all the drawbacks of partisan and representative system the surface only is ruffled by these corrupt democratic pastimes, and the stern impersonal monarchy in the background really ensures, so far as is possible, the reign of justice and the expulsion of privilege. For all that is stable in the constitution of republican France is monarchic; and the sole abiding legacy of the Revolution is the firm centralism of the Corsican avenger of monarchy. Yet, even there, under the impersonal despotism which until Cæsar shall arise controls France, the ministers of the people live at their heavy expense. The democratic officialism, which supersedes the clan-aristocracy of birth, soon acquires all its defects. The cheapest government is that of a nobility, because the public service is not merely the sole career but the duty and pride of a recognised governing class. But if this disinterested labour and strenuous efficiency gave

Democracy gains nothing in freedom by exchanging bureau for feudal superior: civil service, both 'gaoler' and 'robber.'

way before the selfish pride of a slothful or oppressive corporation, as in the Roman Senate or a later feudalism,—the conception of the State revives under a monarch who distributes to all impartial justice and opens the ranks of the official world to merit without restriction. When in its turn monarchy has decayed into dotage or been corrupted by juvenile follies, this new hierarchy, once of merit over against birth, becomes the controller or gaoler of the monarch and the despoiler of his people.

Emperors seek counter-support in vain: servile bodyguard: ingratiation by doles.

§ 6. Justinian's vigilance did not survive his fatal illness; and Justin was met by the deferential resistance of a body, closely knit by common ties of a somewhat sordid interest. If we are to believe the scurrilous lampoon which John of Ephesus has preserved, the ungrateful people put the blame of the general disorder and unease upon the last person who should be held accountable. In the dimmed splendour of this second Adoptive period, we reach the now respectable name of Tiberius; and we see new elements of discord and of hostility. It cannot be denied that he renewed the discipline of the forces, which sensibly relaxed under the suspicious "pacifism" of Justinian's later policy; and we read with interest that the whole military force of the empire directed against Persia amounts to 150,000 men. But history tells a very curious story of Tiberius Constantine; his purchase of 15,000 slaves to create a body of "Federates" devoted personally to the imperial service, over whom Maurice the future emperor was placed as commander. Against the regular forces of the realm he sets as a counterpoise (unless we jump at a too hasty conclusion) a full tithe of its number. Now this policy is the uniform line adopted by despotic and military rulers. The Turkish guard at Bagdad under (or must we say, over?) the successors of Harun, the Janissaries of Christian birth who from the mainstay became the terror of the Ottoman throne,—and the curious traces to-day in old and new Rome, the Swiss and

Albanian Guards of Pope and Sultan;—such is the company in which the servile battalions of Tiberius find themselves. Without believing that the armies reorganised under Justin II. and his successors presented the same mutinous features as the Roman provincial armies in the period of the "Thirty Tyrants;" there is some basis for this hypothesis of a counterpoise. The "Federates" were neither so costly nor so dangerous; and in the absence of any national or patriotic feeling in the professional ranks, there was at least in these hirelings the barbarian attachment to a person from whom they derived everything. Finlay rightly traces in this remarkable venture tokens of the "isolated position and irresponsible power" of the emperor; and it is difficult to decide which is the more strange, that he should feel himself compelled, or that he should have been permitted, to take such a step. We may dismiss with a sigh the reign of this unfortunate but well-meaning monarch. He used the resources of the State to conciliate the classes who least needed the outlay, and who badly repaid his generosity. With his frequent largess to soldiers, to scholastics, and to senators, he left society demoralised and the commonwealth bankrupt. If in the curious phrase of Theophylact, he preferred that the subjects should reign with him, he made an unhappy choice in the precise element for the basis of monarchic power.

Emperors seek counter-support in vain: servile bodyguard: ingratiation by doles.

The military order, "spoilt" by his gifts and leniency, pursued with relentless hate the Maurician essays at reform. Of this prince, most pathetic figure perhaps in all the stately procession of the Cæsars, we cannot forget his noble indifference to popularity, when with usual imperial humanity he rescued a suspected Marcionite from the stake, to which patriarch and people had with warm unanimity condemned him. He was perpetually hampered by financial need; and even his personal prowess did not reconcile the troops to his retrenchment of pay

Emperors seek counter-support in vain: servile bodyguard: ingratiation by doles.

and rations in the Persian campaign, to his severer methods of discipline during the wintry expeditions against the Avar Khan. He was suspected of an anti-military bias; and the revival of the fighting force of the empire was merely the signal for another phase of the great duel, wherein civilian and soldier fought for pre-eminence. And Roman society had need of both, but only in loyal submission to a central sovereignty. A warning of the great mutiny of 602 was seen two and twenty years earlier, when Maurice, still a subject, was met by a serious sedition on the Iberian frontier, which effectually checked this distant campaign. It was in vain that he remitted imposts; the Pope taunts him with the venality of the chief offices of State. To no purpose he wrestles with the due control and proper equipment of the forces; he cannot execute his reforms, and uncertain of the allegiance of the military leaders, he employs members of his own family in the highest post, and barbarians like Droctulf Ipsich and Ilifred. The camp and the court were hostile, and the revolution of a mean and craven centurion was hailed even in the better circles of society as a relief.

Obscure policy of Tiberius and Maurice: appeal to Demes and 'nobles': the suggested partition: Western eulogy of Phocas.

§ 7. A very pretty and attractive theory has been built out of a phrase of Theophylact, a simile of Evagrius,—the democratic basis on which Tiberius Constantine sought to repose the tottering autocracy; and the emergence from a long but not inactive obscurity, of the subterranean and popular factions of the Hippodrome. Looking about for supporters in a corrupt and lukewarm society, the prince could scarcely neglect the frank and outspoken "demes," whose vivacious conversation with Justinian's Mandator formed in the previous age the most amusing of historical incidents. The civil service were confining the sovereign in silken fetters; the leaders of the camp defied his discipline and laughed at his reforms. But the demes might be recognised as enjoying a certain political franchise; their chosen leaders, the

"demarchs" or tribunes, were officially present at the salutation of Maurice; and in the troubled events of his overthrow the animus or sympathy of the faction decides the issue. So then, Tiberius made friends with the organised and well-drilled factions, who may find their exact counterpart in the association of America and the trades-union of the older world. Maurice, on the contrary, reverted to "aristocracy,"—that is, to the aid of the official and civilian hierarchy. Each found allies in a different quarter; but the support in each case was precarious and useless. The civilian element retired with regrets or secret rejoicings from the succession controversies of 602; and the soldiers and the mob decided the most eventful election in Roman history. Both the factions were hostile to Maurice; and even the Blue opponents of Phocas contributed only the unlucky menace which resulted in the massacre of the emperor and his entire family.

Obscure policy of Tiberius and Maurice appeal to Demes and 'nobles': the suggested partition: Western eulogy of Phocas.

In the disaffection of his reign, it is pathetic to remember that an early salutation from these same benches saluted a proud father; when he was greeted at a son's birth with the cry, "Thou hast freed us today from subjection to many masters":—and the further curious trace of the testamentary essay at *patrimonialism* in the remarkable division of the Roman world between his children. In the dearth of significant details, we are perhaps inclined to treat too seriously these isolated facts. But we may presume that Maurice started his reign with a certain popularity due to his upright and strenuous character, that the people honestly hailed the prospect of an unquestioned succession, and that he felt himself at some period strong enough to bequeath a divided empire much as an estate. If this is the case, it would be difficult to exaggerate the extent of the silent revolution which worked in those twenty years of unavailing public service. His low-born successor, raised by a jest to a throne, finds in his dangerous elevation the same solitude and apprehension. He appoints a

Obscure policy of Tiberius and Maurice: appeal to Demes and 'nobles': the suggested partition: Western eulogy of Phocas.

nephew *curopalates* and gives important office to his brother Domentziolus; and as a bulwark to his throne, he marries the prefect of the city, Priscus, to a daughter Domentzia,—an alliance which proved his ruin. So uneasy was the post which he accepted amid the rude congratulations of his fellow-soldiers or the shouts of a mob in the circus, that his reign is little more than a record of conspiracy and summary justice. One incident may give some idea of the squalid horror of the new régime. Narses, a general at the Persian frontier, is forced, as many other worthy leaders, to revolt, in order to save himself from Phocas' suspicion; Edessa becomes for a moment the scene of a brief sovereignty; and like his greater namesake in Italy, perhaps forty years earlier, he is charged with summoning the enemy's treachery into an unguarded country; when at last he is taken he is burnt alive,—the same death, which as we saw was to have been inflicted on a dualist renegade. We suddenly pass into barbarism in the beginning of the seventh century. No principles or traditions of purer times seem to survive, either on the throne or in the palace or the camp. The civil service, abashed and dismayed by the reign of violence and the degradation of the empire, may have felt a vain remorse for their fallen champion; and the Senate will welcome a deliverer and indeed regain some of its ancient influence and dignity under his sons. But we leave the throne of this world occupied by the gloomy and incapable tyrant, whom Eastern subjects pass over as an unspeakable monster, and the Western rulers, Pope and Exarch alike, delight to honour by the most ironical eulogies in all history. Gregory salutes the bearded effigy of the centurion with the words, "*Gloria in excelsis!*" The well-known column of Smaragdus in the Forum still to this hour records the gratitude of the West "for the benefits of the imperial piety, for quiet procured for Italy, and liberty preserved." The elements of society and the world itself were breaking up: the very notion of the organic life of a common-

wealth has disappeared. Nothing but the instant menace of the Persian and the Arab in the next century will recall the subject and the believer to that loyal sympathy with his rulers, on which alone the durable and beneficent State must be founded; a sympathy, it may be noted, which is by no means the exclusive privilege of popular and representative government.

Obscure policy of Tiberius and Maurice: appeal to Demes and 'nobles': the suggested partition: Western eulogy of Phocas.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROTEST OF CARTHAGE; OR, THE SECOND AFRICAN HOUSE AND THE ORTHODOX CRUSADE (610–711 A.D.)

K. The Second African House, or the Dynasty of Heraclius:

Heraclius I. (from Carth.) . . .	610–641 .	milit. pretend.
Heraclius II. (or Const. III. ?), son	641 . . .	birth.
Heraclius III. (or Heraclônas), bro.	641 . . .	birth.
Tiberius III. ('David'), bro.		birth.
"Constans III." (son of Her. II.) .	641–668 .	birth.
Constantinus IV. Pogonatus (son	668–685 .	birth.
{ Heraclius IV. bros. assoc.		birth.
{ Tiberius IV.		birth.
Justinianus II. (son	685–695 .	birth.
Leontius	695–698 .	milit. conspir.
Tiberius V. Apsimarus . . .	698–705 .	milit. nom.
Justinianus II. (restored)	705–711 .	foreign aid.
Tiberius VI., his son, ? assoc. . .	. . . .	birth.
Philippicus, Bardanes . . .	711–713 .	mil. nom.
Anastasius II.	713–716 .	palace nom.
Theodosius III. or IV. . . .	716–717 .	mil. nom.

Second 'African' house: same contempt of the claims of metropolis: ruler's and subject's interest again identical.

§ 1. Some four hundred years before the accession of Heraclius, a saviour of the republic had arisen out of Africa. After a succession of princes, which repeats with curious fidelity the history of Nero and the turmoil after his death, Septimius Severus had quieted the tumult, had restored public order with some severity and much overriding of precedent, had dissolved the pretorians, had insulted the Senate, and in a word had unmasked the stern military basis on which the autocracy had to rest if it meant to secure public order. The elder Severus and Diocletian are the two princes who impressed the still pagan empire with their masterful personality; who ventured to treat with disdain the courtly compromise of Augustus and to suggest a change of capital or at least a division of the empire; who treated with careless

indifference the claims alike of the Senate and of Rome. With Septimius Severus I. and the blunt cruelty and military directness of his rule, a new era opened and lasted until the murder of the second Severus in 235, when the forces of disorder again appear to run riot. Severus I. by birth, Gordianus I. by office, hailed from Africa; the one succeeded in his task; the other failed and with this failure the Roman world fell to pieces. In 610 Heraclius, the Exarch of Africa, bolder than the elder Gordian, despatches son and nephew to attack the tyrant Phocas in his own hideous lair—Phocas, who was then playing unworthily to them the part of Maximinus. Historians hurry over the disgraceful episode of this "tyranny," and show the ease with which the revolution was effected. The capital quietly acquiesced in a new master, with whose election it had nothing to do. The province, recovered just eighty years earlier, dictated to the metropolis, or rather was alone bold enough to voice the general indignation. The seventh century marks the lowest point in the fortunes and prestige of the imperial city. It is no doubt difficult to extricate the thread of public opinion; but the stability of the Heraclian house, its indifference to the peculiar interests of the capital, may perhaps convince us that the provinces endorsed their policy. Misfortune made the Romans ready to accept any deliverer; for the remarkable feature of the late usurpation had been the incompetence of a military reaction to look after military affairs. The early years of Heraclius I. are buried in obscurity; but we need no psychological analysis of a morbid temperament to tell us how they were employed. In preparing for a Persian campaign, the emperor found everything in confusion, the army extinct. It was his difficult task to recall the Roman spirit and rekindle the embers of patriotism.

Second 'African' house: same contempt of the claims of metropolis: ruler's and subject's interest again identical.

We have already noted the method by which he brought the capital to reason. The threat to abandon the city of Constantine reminded the idle and the

Second 'African' house: same contempt of the claims of metropolis: ruler's and subject's interest again identical.

official class of the fate of the older Rome. A certain religious fervour gave the war all the enthusiasm of a crusade. The patriarch exacted from the emperor a solemn oath that he would not desert the city. The subsequent victories in the East, the recovery of the "life-giving wood" of the Cross deepened this revival of fervour and secured the permanence of the dynasty. The danger of shifting the imperial centre of gravity was averted; though the problem recurred later in the history of his grandson. It is perhaps unprofitable to speculate on the possibilities latent in Heraclius' proposals. He wished to substitute Carthage for Byzantium, the "window which looks on Asia," the "doorkeeper of Europe." Could he have transported the imperial tradition and dynasty intact into a new home, the history of Islam might have been reversed. The province of Africa was loyal to the family of Heraclius. Enormous sums had been spent on forts and walls, still exciting our wonder to-day but betraying one signal weakness of the Byzantine rule,—its dependence on mechanical safeguards.

Later, the torrent of Arab conquest swept across Africa, subdued the Roman province in the last years of this century, passed over Mauritania, crossed to Spain, submerged an inconsiderable islet of Ceuta, last "Roman" appanage in the West, covered the peninsula, and within a hundred years from the death of Mahomet, rose with a sudden neap-tide to the level of the Loire and Poitiers. Had the design of Heraclius taken effect, the road to Europe would not have lain open on the South; Charles Martel might have lost the credit of repulsing the invader; and the claim of religious champion of Western Christendom would have been wanting to the imperial title of his grandson. History might have been profoundly modified; and Islam might have entered Constantinople just eight centuries before the event. Enlightened Moslem caliphs might have reigned there instead of Bagdad; and the tolerance and culture of Cordova and Granada

might have flourished somewhat earlier in the East. For the peculiar and reactionary temper of the Osmanlis is very different from the lenient and adaptive spirit of the first Arabian leaders: and the fortunes of Eastern Europe might have been better if the fated blow had fallen earlier. It is no doubt impossible to hazard a surmise as to the probable extent of Moslem conquest towards North and West, had they succeeded in seizing an empty capital; we may doubt if the vague and already decaying empire of the Avars could have opposed any effective resistance, or much temptation for further advance. But in any case, the compact of patriarch, people, and sovereign was a notable event, pregnant with important issues. It was a new and a solemn treaty between ruler and subjects, ratified by the only independent power, and consecrated with a religious sanction. Once more the interest of ruler and subject were welded together; or rather the eyes of the citizens were suddenly opened to the dangers that menaced the State, to the need of discipline, obedience, and unselfishness. Yet in spite of this, it cannot be said that anything approaching the modern and perhaps Teutonic feeling of personal loyalty was aroused.

Second 'African' house: same contempt of the claims of metropolis: ruler's and subject's interest again identical.

§ 2. The line of the Heraclian house passes before us with breathless rapidity. In a period of one hundred years, six emperors in direct descent occupy the throne; a singular contrast to the last age of our recital, when a father and two daughters, Constantine IX., Zoe, and Theodora, account in the imperial records for almost a similar period (963–1056). Yet this remarkable swiftness of succession leads to no long minorities or ineffective regencies. The emperor occupies, during the dynasty of Heraclius, the whole stage. The military element is once more in the ascendant; that is, the emperor must lead in person, and cannot delegate his highest duty. After the Senate had insisted on the exclusion of the odious posterity of Martina, they perhaps, as some writers maintain, kept hold of the reins during the early

Official class sinks into sudden insignificance: personal monarchy: unfortunate issue of heroic conquest of Persia.

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years of Constans III., who in his boyish speeches preserves an attitude of well-tutored deference. But that sovereign was wilful and energetic; he became his own first minister, his own chancellor of the exchequer; and until Justinian II. we hear nothing of the secondary agents of authority, or of the heads of the chief departments of State. Two curious incidents are quoted (though their significance is anything but obvious) to show the attitude of the "Romans" to the reigning family: when Constans III. sends for his wife and children to rejoin him in Syracuse, the Senate, dreading the revival of his grandfather's project, refused leave: and again, at the accession of his son, Constantine IV. (as he is inaccurately called), the army insists on a triad of emperors; for, said the superstitious soldiers, "there are three that bear witness in heaven," and the number of rulers on earth must copy the heavenly model. The bare mention of these strange prejudices excites our interest; but it is difficult to found any theory upon them. Constans III., before he travelled West, must have felt at least secure of the allegiance of the capital; and he must have dismissed the Moslem peril as for the moment contemptible, or have reposed entire confidence in that fresh arrangement of provincial rule, which forms for the student one of the chief interests in the New Monarchy. We cannot justly conclude that the regents in his absence despised his authority; and it is probable that both in the fabled cause of his long absence (remorse for a brother's murder), and in the circumstances of this curious refusal,—we have a one-sided and mistaken account. The story of the military mutiny in favour of a trinity of rulers has a suspicious ring, and it is difficult to see in it any question of principle: clearly it was a wayward and spasmodic outburst, easily pacified by firm measures, to which it would be an error to attach serious political importance. For seventy years the "Roman" world was governed by the personal initiative of princes, born

in the purple and crowned associates of empire in childhood. The line ended in a strenuous and not incapable tyrant, whose acts reveal something of the distraught and wayward strain of the Claudian blood. And after his murder (or we may say with truth, after his deposition, sixteen years earlier) the edifice again collapses, and has to be rebuilt from the very foundation. And this will be the task of the "Isaurian" family; the chief watchword of reform and reconstruction will be Iconoclasm; the whole movement will partake of a Protestant character, anti-dogmatic and perhaps anti-Hellenic. The present epoch is a revival of orthodoxy and the preaching of a religious crusade, while the later century is hostile to Greek culture and superstition, and is perhaps a second wave of Islam and its puritanism. The strength of the Church is to be noticed in the new vigour of Heraclius' Persian campaigns; and its weakness in the continuous estrangement of the turbulent and metaphysical populations in the great Eastern centres. The Persian wars were further aided by the intrinsic disorder and disloyalty which prevailed no less in that country. Heraclius, whose merited renown nothing can tarnish, would have allowed his debt to these domestic revolutions. But there is no cause for astonishment at the success of the "Roman" arms. We have noted the unreality which pervades the whole series of Parthian and Persian campaigns, and forbids us to attach serious importance to the costly and unmeaning tournament. The vindictive enemy of one year becomes the bosom friend of the next; and from Augustus' time, no guardian of a young prince was so well trusted as the Roman emperor, his hereditary foe. Arcadius was offered, and Maurice accepted, this curious legacy; yet these close ties never seemed to hinder the annual excursion and foray which laid waste Syria down to the middle of the sixth century, and penetrated under Phocas to the very shores of the Bosphorus.

Official class sinks into sudden insignificance: personal monarchy: unfortunate issue of heroic conquest of Persia.

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The whole series of Persian wars from republican times presents a puzzling problem. Elsewhere, we fancy, we can trace by patient search the secret motives or inner stimulus of warfare and national collision; and for the most part we find the explanation in the *economic* sphere. But this special class alone, like border conflict in the feudal epoch, seems to be explained by the mere fact of contiguity,—a natural outlet for the spirit and vigour of two peoples, or perhaps governments, at different stages indeed of advance, but both alike condemned within to a policy of inactive conservatism. It cannot be denied that some have attempted, and will again attempt, to draw the Partho-Roman conflict of over seven centuries into the economic category, and explain how it was due to the same commercial jealousy that drove Rome to destroy Carthage. The ætiologist, like the lawyer and the philosopher, has a rooted distrust of the exceptional; and will not believe that any movement can lie outside his formula. But it would be a hard task to force these campaigns under such a definition. They seem to have fought on the frontier, because they were close and unsympathetic neighbours; no great principles or interests were at stake. Heraclius did what Severus I., his great African predecessor, had done; nay, what Trajan, last of aggressive warriors, had effected. He humbled the pride of Persia; he did not attempt to annex. So in former times, Arsacid and Sassanid had made a freebooting foray, but had never incorporated the provinces they ruined or overran. Rome, whether under Hadrian (117) or Jovian (363), freely relinquished what she did not wish to retain or administer; and perhaps the sagacious precedent of the former will redeem the latter from the charge of mere cowardly surrender: Jovian was not wholly in the wrong when he could appeal to this wise and moderate example. The futile insults of the Persian monarchy reached an intolerable height in the reign of Phocas; Heraclius avenged and retaliated; and

the two exhausted peoples (or, once more, rather the two governments) fell before a common foe. We have already noticed that no useful object was secured by this transient revival of military glory. Heraclius might have turned his army reforms to the permanent defence of the Eastern frontier, and his crusading enthusiasm to the conciliation of the bitter religious feuds.

Official class sinks into sudden insignificance: personal monarchy: unfortunate issue of heroic conquest of Persia.

§ 3. But, as it was, the momentary impulse was exhausted in fruitless though perhaps inevitable campaigns. The empire could not raise a second army; the royal family of Persia were discredited and the fabric disorganised. Syria and Egypt and Persia fell to the successors of Mahomet, whose firm tolerance and religious and domestic simplicity gained the indifferent consent, perhaps even the warm allegiance of the provincials. The frontiers of Rome retreated to the mountains of Cilicia; and almost without a blow the Arab won an enduring ascendancy over the richest portion of the empire.

Religious dissent opens East to Islam: strange vicissitudes of empire in this century.

It is impossible to explain away the prevailing disaffection, the easy acquiescence in foreign and heathen yoke. Persia had already during ten years administered by deputy the Granary of the Roman capital; Egypt had been happy and contented under the Mokaukas. It passed with equal facility to the Caliph; and sympathised no doubt with the relief of its proconsular Patriarch:—who at last owned a master who could not take a side in religious disputes. The crusading ideal was rudely shattered. It had for a moment united the "Romans" in a holy war for the recovery of the Sacred Wood. Centuries before, the hearts of the indolent citizens (and even the pulse of erotic poets) beat with a common enthusiasm for the recovery of the standards lost with Crassus at Carrhæ. Roman society was for a time serious over the Eastern peril under Antony and Cleopatra, and Augustus built his dominion more securely on the national victory at Actium. But none of this spirit

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seems to have survived in the third decade of Heraclius' reign. Cyrus, the Alexandrian Patriarch, desired to come to terms with the infidel, and suggested a truly "amazing marriage" with one of the emperor's daughters. Internal treachery or indifference completed the conquest. Syria, seething with religious feuds, welcomed an alien protectorate; her polite and capable sons, pressing into the civil service of the Arabians, enjoyed a long monopoly of the administration. Little was changed by the conquerors, but the taxes were lightened, the religious ferment allayed, justice was honestly distributed. The civil or religious dissension which rent the caliphate after the death of Othman (656) put an end to the hopes of further conquest. A much needed respite was given to the "Roman" Empire; and good use was made of the reprieve. Nothing in history can well be more obscure than the achievements, the policy, the ministers of that prince, whom we must in deference to custom continue to call Constans III. But we do not believe that he quitted the Eastern capital because, like his grandfather, he despaired of its safety. Whether superstitious remorse for a brother's murder or a high political aim drove him to Italy, it cannot be doubted that he left Byzantium secure. In a few years, we shall witness the caliphate paying tribute to his son; and we have to grow accustomed to these sudden vicissitudes of pride and humiliation. To the throne of Constantine IV. flocked the chiefs of the wild Danubian tribes, the leaders of Italy, the "gastaldi" of the Lombard towns. In him was recognised one who by set purpose or happy accident had become the arbiter of Eastern Europe, and (in spite of the continued progress of the Arabians westwards through Northern Africa) was still the chief power in the Mediterranean. The lengthy and terrible siege of the capital by the Arabs had completely failed; and Christendom breathed freely again. This confession of inferiority

or alliance is repeated towards the close of the century.

Religious dissent opens East to Islam: strange vicissitudes of empire in this century.

Justinian II. receives the respectful homage and costly tribute from the caliphate; and the continued and wholesome progress of the diminished empire was only arrested by his madness, and by the twenty years anarchy which succeeded his first deposition. Once more, the forces of blind disintegration are supreme. The steady work accomplished by the Heracliads is almost in a moment destroyed. Under the usurpers Leontius and Tiberius V., the whole of Africa is lost; and before Leo III. arose, an imperial official opened the Spanish peninsula to the Arabs. Asia Minor, no longer a compact province to the Amanus, is repeatedly overrun; Justinian II. is restored by an unholy alliance with a barbarian, and is the first Roman emperor before Alexius IV. to reconquer his capital and take vengeance on his own subjects by the aid of foreign arms. And Leo the "Isaurian" himself is suspected of coming to an impious understanding with the Arabs in the heart of Asia Minor, that he might have leisure to pursue his ambition. In any case, before the second great siege of the capital, all the work which awaited the African champion just a century before had to be done again. Nothing remained but the great Roman tradition of the memories of Heraclius' campaigns, and the sobering fear of the Moslem. None of the five sovereigns who interposed some fifteen years between the Heracliads and the "Isaurians," were wanting in some measure of vigour or ability. But the absence of dynastic stability was fatal to any continuity of purpose, any glowing inspiration of personal loyalty. An ironical accident or a practical joke suddenly placed, of all unlikely candidates, a revenue-officer of Adramyttium on the throne. He was given the popular name of Theodosius, which together with Tiberius seems to have had an especial attraction for the "Romans" of this age.

Decay of earlier complex and civilian system: pre-eminence of the soldier and the administrative court-martial: 'Themes.'

§ 4. That a tax-collector, a lineal descendant of the detested "publican," should have enjoyed such popularity is a surprising circumstance. It may lead us to the not improbable conclusion that the entire system of oppressive finance was either modified or extinct. The Balkan peninsula was overrun by Slavs and settlers of other tribes, owning a nominal allegiance, and in practice defying any central authority; the Greek towns of Dalmatia, and we cannot doubt of Hellas proper, paid an insignificant "quit-rent" in acknowledgment of imperial claims which were rarely enforced, of a "Roman" protectorate which was rarely efficient. As the Emperor Maurice advised the liberal Pope to use the rich gifts despatched to the capital rather to purchase peace from the Lombards than enrich his own treasury, so the Illyrian townships were allowed to pay their fee-farm-rent to the barbarian settler, who lived around them and interposed a real barrier to any regular intercourse with the metropolis. In Asia Minor we may question if the routine of civil administration, the punctual tax-collecting, survived the long Persian occupation and Arab inroads. At any rate, in the latter half of the seventh century the system of "themes" replaced the organisation of Diocletian, Constantine, and Justinian I.

A military government, with its inevitable attendants, compulsory but irregular taxation, and a large measure of internal autonomy, replaced the careful and methodical civilian régime, which had been the pride and the security of the Roman Empire. The Western campaigns and visits of Constans III. were conducted without apparent system or principle. The Byzantine monarchs partake largely in this age of the features of feudal sovereignty; the intervention of the sovereign power is strictly personal, unsystematic, and incoherent. The emperor paid or received tribute without exciting the indignation or the pride of the subject by these startling changes of attitude. In a word, the seventh century is an age of barbarism and of superstí-

tion, and is the fixed "nadir" of "Roman" fortunes in the entire period before us. A servant-girl is burnt for an unwitting insult to a dead empress' bier; an emperor's mother is chastised by an insolent minister; the wealthy are exposed to the tortures of the monk and the eunuch who monopolise power under Justinian II.; pretenders and usurpers, instead of meeting the mild penalties which characterised Byzantium, suffered the full rigour of high treason; a whole imperial line is extinguished in the person of an innocent lad of six; and to bring to justice a powerful noble, Butelin, for a felony, the emperor like some insecure Merovingian, has to resort to craft. This savage conduct reflects not the studied barbarity of a governing class or a mad dynasty; it reflects the whole tone and temper of a people. The entire fabric of government was out of order; pestilence and earthquakes, superstition, religious metaphysics, and abstention had almost annihilated the "Romans." The effective work of the Heraclian family can scarcely be overestimated in holding together this crumbling edifice. Yet the inherent weakness of the Roman constitution robbed it of all lasting value. The "Isaurian" dynasty represents a new principle of reconstruction, and a Protestant reaction against subtlety and asceticism. The slight records of anecdotes and conversations under the Heracliads take us into an unfamiliar and primitive atmosphere. We are frankly out of sympathy with what we read; we seem to have returned to the rudiments, a society terrorised by cruel priestcraft. Social intercourse and religious controversy seem alike unreal and unconvincing. Political ideas, though we may fancy we can descry their outline through the gloom, seem grotesque and incoherent. Yet we can safely assert that this second African dynasty performed a service to the State, of which we cannot exaggerate the value and the consequence. All might have been lost but memories and regrets at the accession of Leo III.; but had it not been for Heraclius, Constans III., and

Decay of earlier complex and civilian system: pre-eminence of the soldier and the administrative court-martial: 'Themes.'

Constantine IV., not even these could have survived from the wreck, which threatened the Roman commonwealth in the reign of Phocas.

Primacy regained over disintegrant elements: 'State-armies' once more replace feudal militia.

§ 5. But before we can finally dismiss this barbarous and uncertain period in our general survey, certain further features of interest or perplexity must be included. We have often declared or implied that the most serious menace to the *civil* or *secular* authority lies in the power of the Church and the power of the sword. This, like so many summary phrases or conclusions of history, is in itself but a commonplace truism. Yet it will be necessary to keep it in mind and to apply the principle to the obscure movements of national or political life. We have noted how in the West the arena is divided between these two rivals and sometime allies; while the supreme arbiter, who in the Roman system sat aloft impartial over all,—the embodiment of the State,—had now disappeared. The feudal age could somehow arrive at a dim conception of that mighty abstraction, the Church; but its enthusiasm was incapable of being stirred by an appeal to the common welfare. Nearer interests, immediate needs and crises flocked in like the rout of Alcibiades in the *Symposium*, and distracted an attention by no means lacking in generous thoughts and unselfish motives. But the rights and allegiance and prejudices which had once belonged to the State, the body politic, became disentangled from such an airy conception and clustered round persons, in genuine Teutonic individualism. And Church and Army (to sum up in brief phrase the two chief factors of mediæval Europe) divide or usurp between them the spoils and prerogative of the fugitive sovereign. The notion of the "commonwealth" will not revive until it is reinforced by the strong presence of a monarch. And it is by his personal influence or prestige or daring, that he wins back the scattered rights of the civil power, and paves the way for the (perhaps ungrateful)

impersonal republic; which profits by his service and supplants him. Only in the Eastern realm was this conception steadily maintained, through evil and good report alike; and the critical moment when the people or government of Byzantium were summoned to make the fatal choice between feudal or central rule, arrived in the years which witnessed the rise, the exploits, and the decline of the Heraclian house. Nothing is more dim, yet nothing more persevering, than the conviction expressed with vague eloquence by historians, of that *aristocratic* reaction, which overthrew the work of Justinian and nearly buried in its ruins Roman institutions, Hellenic culture, and perhaps even the orthodox faith in the East. We have an abiding intuition (in default of certain knowledge) that Heraclius had to struggle against disintegration and inefficiency in the civil sphere, encroachment in the domain of religious or ecclesiastical influence. We are sure that the empire owed as much to his efforts at securing a real control of the official world, as to his unflagging confidence, zeal, and capacity in military matters; that he was called upon to fight against many tendencies subversive of unity, equity, and public order.

Primacy regained over disintegrant elements: 'State-armies' once more replace feudal militia.

And once more we must refuse to be led astray upon the tempting modern issue, whether it was worth while? We have perhaps too often surrendered to the lures of this debate, and wasted time upon an imperishable dispute, which in the nature of things can never be settled. Let us be content with the knowledge that Heraclius thought it his duty no less than Leo, his perhaps greater follower in the task; and that the strongest current of the age set in his favour and carried him in safety over rocks and quicksands. For the dangers which beset the ship of State were both conspicuous and unseen; it was easy to point to the Persian and later to the Saracen menace; it was not so easy to diagnose or to prescribe for the hidden ailments or chronic weakness of the State. The Heraclian, like the suc-

Primacy regained over disintegrant elements: 'State-armies' once more replace feudal militia.

ceeding dynasty, maintained with unflinching courage the central supremacy against nobles, officials, and churchmen; and once more a Roman emperor is seen boldly refusing to become a puppet. This perhaps is the earliest and most striking phase,—Heraclius insists on leading his own armies. Almost at the same moment in the great Middle Kingdom, the same scene was enacted. Here as it were in a parallel column are two episodes in the lives of Heraclius and of Lichi, the second of the Tang dynasty, whose reign began in the middle of the Persian campaigns (625). It is recorded that the civil mandarins were much shocked at the emperor's interest in the army, and complained of his impropriety in witnessing the reviews and drill of the troops. Not twelve years before, Priscus, the son-in-law of Phocas, had remonstrated with Heraclius for deciding to break with the tradition of seclusion. An interview was accorded to the emperor after many excuses and much reluctance at his post of command in Cappadocia; in which, as if with desire to insult, he pronounced it illegal for the sovereign to quit the palace, and visit the distant forces far from the capital (*οὐκ ἐξὸν βασιλεῖ . . . καταλιμπάνειν βασίλεια κ. ταῖς πόρρω ἐπιχωριάζειν δυνάμεσιν*). It is possible to build upon a slender phrase an over-weighty hypothesis; yet the student cannot help seeing in such the whole pretensions of a warlike feudalism, as in China of an over-refined civilian bureaucracy. And the separatism and disintegration from which the Heraclian family for a time rescued the commonwealth, cannot be better illustrated than by the words of Heraclius himself,—when he addresses the half-mutinous Cappadocian regiments of the lately-disgraced Priscus, with all the winning confidence of Richard II. to the London mob: "The good Father Crispus had you as his henchmen up to now, but we to-day name you the household servants of sovereignty itself" (from *ὑπουργοὶ* to a man, they were transformed into *οἰκειακοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ὑπηρέται*).

Primacy regained over disintegrant elements: 'State-armies' once more replace feudal militia.

It would then appear that in the great disintegration of the reign of Phocas, every man fought for his own hand, without regard to loyalty towards person or abstraction; and that in summoning Heraclius to supersede his impossible father-in-law, "Crispus" (as Nicephorus calls him) had no intention of surrendering the immunity or private influence which Phocas' misrule had bestowed. The title "henchmen" may be a mere convenient term, but it suggests the whole atmosphere of the German *comitatus*, mediæval right of private war, and the epoch of the "condottieri." Such was one of the many difficulties against which Heraclius contended. The armies of the State had vanished, as we are told, in the misrule of Phocas, except the Caleb and Joshua of the future reorganisation. In their place had arisen men attached to a person, like the armies of Cæsar or of Pompey, but ignorant or careless of the wider interests of the State. To substitute an impersonal tie of regimental tradition, dutiful services and implicit obedience, apart from private sympathies, was the great work of imperial Rome,—and no emperor, even in the days of Claudius II. or Aurelian, was confronted with a harder task than Heraclius.

Church still independent and outspoken: Constans III and Frederic II.

§ 6. Another half-autonomous power was the Church, as represented by the patriarchs of old and new Rome. If the civil service were interested in preserving the sovereign in a permanent minority, if like Arbogastes (392) or Aëtius (454), the military staff or the feudal chieftain of the province desired to repress this inconvenient vigilance,—the Church withdrew a large tract of public and private life from the central control. It could boast a far more definite and written constitution than the State, not subject to changes in its continuous policy by vacant See or even interrupted series; and it availed itself of the weakness of an elective monarchy and extorted concessions from the secular power, at a very inopportune moment. At every new election, the patriarch demanded from the emperor a profession of orthodoxy, and made this a condition

Church still independent and outspoken: Constans III. and Frederic II.

of the Church's favour and support. When firmly seated, the emperor on his part lost no time in taking his revenge for this urgent inquisition; he could remove the bishop who had ventured to make terms for his coronation. For however much the sovereign, and Heraclius in particular, might depend on a wave of religious emotion and the favourable influence of the metropolitan See, the great aim of the dynasties of the seventh and eighth centuries was to recover the paramount authority of the *civil* power over the dissident elements,—whether clergy or soldiers. The descendants of Meroveus or of Martel might sign away to abbey or noble the "regal rights" and remain content with a formal and often an ironical recognition. But the empire strove with manful consistency against clerical or military encroachment; and although Heraclius availed himself of the good offices of Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria and of Patriarch Sergius of his own capital, he was determined to maintain the supremacy of the State, and to secure over his realm uniformity of faith and worship on lines chosen by himself. Thus he arrested the feudalising tendency already at work in the East; which, specialising and isolating men according to their chief business, as it were bifurcated society into the "brahmin" and the "chatriya": "Thou to fight and I to pray." The chief centres of human activity in the West are already the monastery and the camp,—or rather the castle. Cyrus, as we saw, attempted to make terms of alliance in which the victim or Andromeda was the emperor's own daughter; Sergius is left regent during the Persian wars (622–628) and supplies large funds for these costly campaigns by sanctioning a loan of Church treasure. Nor is it without significance that one weighty embassy at least, to the Persian Court, is sent in the name of the Senate; and that this anomalous body of officials, which inherited the tradition and perhaps some of the ancient spirit of the Roman prototype, controlled the succession after the death of Heraclius,

banished Martina, Heraclius III., and Tiberius III., and directed affairs during the minority of Constans.

Church still independent and outspoken: Constans III. and Frederic II.

How well this last emperor performed his stern solitary and centralising mission, how bitter was the odium he incurred, may be seen both by the security and by the ill odour in which he quitted his capital for ever. The decade 650–660 may be one of the momentous and critical periods in the history of the constitution; but it is also the most obscure. How he welded the State into an integral organism again, what forces or influences he arrayed against nobles who clamoured for immunity, against clergy who demanded supremacy,—we cannot tell. He is far more tenacious of Erastian principles than his father or his son; for it is not unlikely that Constantine IV. (668–685) is indebted for the favourable treatment of his reign and character by Church historians, to his indulgence and courtesy to the dominant creed and party. Constans is tolerant or indifferent; and like his greater Sicilian brother-Augustus nearly six hundred years later, is concerned more with public order and the abatement of the nuisance of religious feud than with the letter of speculative orthodoxy. But in vain was the wide net of the imperial appeal spread in the sight of the sects; and the south-eastern parts of the realm fell a prey to religious and national disaffection. And Constans was born too early; both in old and new Rome clerical and theological interests were dominant, and the demand for tolerance and uniformity under the imperial authority was unheeded. Against the independent and critical attitude of the "nobles," the open defiance of provincial commanders, the encroachment of the Church,—Heraclius wished to create a compact family-party, and like Vespasian, like Justinian, sought faithful adherents for chief posts in his circle of kinsmen. A despotic or centralised system where everything depends on the monarch's life, is apt to vacillate between inordinate confidence in kinsmen and inordinate mistrust; there would seem to be room for no moderate position. Mauricius and

Phocas resemble each other in nothing but this,—the trust they reposed in fraternal loyalty; and Theodorus who succeeded to the dangerous influence of Priscus, is the brother of Heraclius.

Collapse of the Heraclian edifice: 'Isaurians' must rebuild anew on novel principle: territorial continuity.

§ 7. We have attempted to give some dim and general idea of the forces, feudal, racial, and ecclesiastical, which noisily or in silence were tearing apart a system of government, in its origin unique anti-national and integral. The task is not done so effectively by the Heracliads that a repaired structure can safely defy the future onslaught of disintegrating influence. Leo III. will find himself confronted by much the same problems; and perhaps the secret of his more permanent solution will be found in this;—the metropolis once again recovers its proper place as the focus and centre of a substantial and continuous unity. By the time Leo had leisure to rebuild the ruined fabric of Heraclius, all strange designs to shift the capital to Rome or Carthage had vanished into the world of curious myth and tradition. The aim of Leo is to solidify, and to found a realm upon the basis of territorial continuity rather than ecumenical hegemony. We are surprised to find Heraclius at the moment of his supreme weakness and despondency negotiating with the powerful kings of Spain and France, with all the exceptional air of a recognised suzerain. One of the incidents of the crusading fervour and religious revival of the seventh century was an intense anti-Semitic feeling. The clever and scientific versifier, Sisebut the Visigoth, the last of the real Merovingian rulers Dagobert,—are represented as bowing respectfully to the behests of Constantinople and the emperor's personal wish; there is to be no mercy shown to the Jews; and Fredegarius, the chronicler whose earthly Zion is the Eastern capital, records without surprise the recognition of the imperial decree in provinces long severed from the parent trunk. At a moment when, from the walls of the helpless and beleaguered capital, the camp-fires of Avars and Persians could be seen, the writ of a Roman

emperor still "ran" in the Teutonic monarchies. The respect and prestige of the new Rome was unimpaired in the West; and the barbarians were truer to the fixed seat of government than the emperor himself. For all this desultory pretence at overlordship, Leo cared nothing. The dream of Heraclius to carry with him the empire to Carthage must have seemed to him a futile myth; for Carthage was no longer Roman. The Western designs and policy of Constans III., the visionary scheme of a capital in Italy or Sicily, must have appeared pure quixotism. The "Isaurians" having stopped the drain of "Peter's pence," let slip the West with no visible reluctance. Such were the altered circumstances of the seventh and eighth centuries; and the reason of this novel attitude is to be found in the new function of the Eastern city and the Eastern Roman monarch,—the bulwark and the warder of Europe.—We may very briefly dismiss the significant features in constitutional development during the last days of the Heracliads and the transient "tyrannies" of their successors. Justinian II., conscious imitator of his greater namesake, employs like him evil agents; and the military revolution of 695 is largely reinforced by the common hatred of the monk and the eunuch, whom the "king delighted to honour." The capricious cruelty and exactions of his finance minister recalled the behaviour of John the Cappadocian or Alexander the Scissors: and by his side sat no Theodora to counsel firmness in the moment of danger. The Heraclian throne fell with startling abruptness; with all its proud retrospect and tradition, with all its claim to national gratitude. We shall not here describe particularly the motives and events of the five elections which succeeded the fall of the Heracliads. Philippicus the Armenian heralds the great Armeniac predominance which marks the next age; and forms a brief and troubled presage of that later pacific and civilian policy to which the ultimate decay of the system may be certainly traced. Like the Constantines of the eleventh

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century, he represents an anti-military spirit; he starves the army, and although Artemius or Anastasius II. sets himself to repair this signal error, the years which follow testify to a natural reaction. The Obsician regiments control the situation; and we are back once more in the days of Otho Vitellius and Vespasian. After the elevation of Theodosius III.,—as fanciful or ironical as the salutation of the fugitive Claudius,—the direct military interests and the commanders of legions reassert their claim to control affairs. The new warrior and Protestant dynasty reaches power through the pitiable state of Asia Minor and the Arab inroads, through the general demand for a firm policy and the direct rule of a capable soldier, of a thrifty and far-seeing statesman. —Yet with all this serious task confronting Leo, with the spectacle of the complete ruin of the Heraclian edifice, of the apparent failure of the aims and hopes of the once popular champion from Africa,—we must conclude by repeating, that there would have been no task for Leo III., no plan or model, and no material for the new structure, but for the courage and pertinacity of the Heraclian dynasty.

BOOK IV

ZENITH AND DECLINE OF THE BYZANTINE MONARCHY UNDER ASIATIC INFLUENCE: ROMAN TRADITION, THE COURT, AND THE FEUDAL NOBILITY

CHAPTER I

THE SECOND SYRIAN HOUSE; OR, THE ATTEMPT AT PROTESTANT REFORM (717–820 A.D.)

L. The Second Syrian House, or the dynasty of the "Isaurians":

Leo III. (Conon) (Isaur. or Syr.)	717–740	milit. nom.
Constantinus V. (son)	740–775	birth.
Artavasdus (son-in-law of Leo III.)	741–742	Female right.
Leo IV. (son)	775–780	birth.
Constantinus VI. (son)	780–797	birth.
Irene (mother)	797–802	Femin. usurp.
Nicephorus I. (Arab)	802–811	palace conspir.
Stauracius (son)	811	birth.
Michael I. (bro.-in-law)	811–813	Female right.
Leo V. (Armenian)	813–820	milit. nom.

Leo III. wars against superstition and sterility: a Puritan and an Englishman.

§ 1. The murder of Justinian II., the extinction of the Heraclian house, left the empire on the brink of ruin. The very province which had sent forth a deliverer a century ago had been finally torn away. Palace intrigue, a Bulgarian army, a justly indignant Greek colony, a band of riotous soldiers at Adramyttium,—such were the accidental instruments in the elevation of Justinian's successors. The greatest prize in the world was once more thrown open to military competition. This time the knight-errant who is to release the enchanted princess comes from the East. Whether of Isaurian or Syrian descent, Leo III. is the very antipodes of the late disinherited dynasty. He represents a distinct reaction against the Greek Church, against metaphysics and superstition, against that anchoritic ideal, which allied with plague and pestilence tends to empty the realm of the tillers and defenders of the soil. He is deeply incensed at monastic selfishness, and profoundly convinced of the extreme peril of the State. He has all the laborious perseverance of an emperor of the old

Leo III. wars against superstition and sterility: a Puritan and an Englishman.

Roman type; and he will not idly delegate either work or responsibility. Once more, the central government was in disorder; the Arab armies were at the heart of Asia Minor; and the region, practically dependent on the feeble administration, seemed strictly confined to the shores of the Ægean and the precarious Danubian district. The exarchate was terrified but not appeased by the vengeance of Justinian II., and the long line of Greek pontiffs was already showing that no "pope can be a Ghibelline"; and that the election to the Holy See changed a timid subject into a rival and perhaps a foe. The one hope of the republic lay in the "themes" and their generals. Leo III. brought frankness, simplicity, and authority from the camp into the heavy air of the court; and he never shrank from personal burdens. We cannot doubt that in his campaign against images, as in his heroic defence of the capital, he had the hearty support of a very large body of his subjects. The return of Hellenic influences under Irene the Athenian was distasteful to enlightened opinion; and the restoration of images was not effected without difficulty. The principate, lying open to the successful candidate without respect to class or race, was now captured by an outspoken representative of Iconoclasm, of the military spirit.

We shall not here attempt to trace the precise affiliation of Armenian heresy, or its relation with Nestorius or the Paulicians; but it is no hard matter to discover its underlying principles. The Hellenic mind had been, from the very dawn of its history, abstentionist and anchoritic. When it became fully aware of itself, it quitted the concerns and the domain of the civic life with genuine or simulated disgust. We are apt to associate the Greeks with a lively and immediate interest in the politics of a busy society; it is not easy to regard their conscious thought, as in its essence and tendency, supremely *mystical*. The spirit and vocabulary of the philosophers was made subservient to the Christian Church; and theologians will to the end of time be divided

on the wisdom and utility of this alliance. And this interest was largely metaphysical; and concerned the relation of the conscious mind of the sage to the great reservoir of mental activity, which was the most real, or the only real, thing in the universe of being. The duties of the common life were disparaged; and the same lethargic indifference, as the highest virtue attainable by man, marks the Indian Gymnosophist, the Stoic thinker, and though in a less degree, the more genial Platonist and the Christian believer, in certain forms of his apprenticeship for eternity. Religion was to such, largely an intellectual matter; for the excellence of man, the sole chance of union with the Divine, lay in the exercise of thought. The Church, with its claim to universality, had found a place for every station and business, every faculty and talent; and was not behind the more humane of Cynic and Stoic philosophers in ascribing a dignity even to the slave. But there was the same mischievous hierarchy of merit, in which an absorbed logical cleverness or rapt devotional meditation was allowed to usurp the chief place. And the common people, robbed of the natural complacence of hard work, were taught to look up to apathy or subtlety; just as in India to-day it is not the reformer or the humanitarian that commands respect, but the hermit. Yet it may be noticed that Christian anchoritism is never wholly contemptuous of the vulgar. A familiar poem has presented us with the picture of self-immersed meditation as the end of life. Yet S. Simeon Stylites is praised by the Greek historian for his "practical" interest; and his solitary pillar became the resort of those who needed private or political advice. But the retirement of the most enlightened and conscientious from active service in the State, from the cares and duties of domestic life, produced a real void in the Eastern empire as in mediæval Europe. A selfish and decadent civilisation, whether amongst ourselves to-day or in the Roman world under Augustus, is found to produce the same ebb as a rigid asceticism;—viz. a shrinking

Leo III. wars against superstition and sterility: a Puritan and an Englishman.

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birth-rate in the classes where stability and equilibrium is most to be desired. We have not the means of forming a trustworthy census of the dominions that still owned the Roman sway; but we can well believe that the continuous record of disaster and disease, the dismal story of wanton rapine and civil war, and the very remedy itself, founding of new convents and monasteries, must have very seriously impoverished the "citizens" since the end of the reign of the first Justinian. Culture and a settled life, monotonous rather than orderly, lingered on in the sequestered oases, the cities which formed a diamond network from Ceuta to Cherson, the real substance of the Roman Empire. Foreigners tilled a perilous or neglected country; barbarian hordes settled in the Balkan peninsula; "Sclavinia" ate out the very heart of the European realm.

Great debt to 'Iconoclastic' dynasty: rupture with West inevitable.

§ 2. So then these causes combined to bring to the front a new view of life and of religion,—a very distinct reaction against the old standard, an ideal of Hellenic *ascêsis* and the meditative ease of unpatriotic monks. Leo III. displays the temper of the average Englishman; averse to abstruse speculation on the faith, holding fast to a few plain and practical truths, intolerant of the superstition, which peopled once more for the poor and ignorant a pagan pantheon in the threadbare disguise of martyrs, or dispensed in the tutelage of a special saint with every need for personal exertion. He did not, with the Oriental mind in general, accept the utter vanity of human effort; and he was convinced that we could be far more certain of controlling the present, than of penetrating the mysteries of the future. Above all, he was an imperialist; and in this respect was impatient of any supineness or indifference. The true life was the life that the Emperor Augustus had in vain tried to restore to favour seven hundred years ago: that of the sober, contented citizen, giving children to recruit the State and fight the needful

battles of the peaceful commonwealth. He resembles indeed far more nearly a Roman of the antique republic than his predecessor Heraclius. He knows no moments of nervous despondency; he forms his design with patience and calculation; he perseveres in it to the end. So far is he from sympathy with older Rome, now a purely clerical city, with its orthodoxy and traditions, that he may even be suspected of almost entire ignorance of the whole Roman epic.

Great debt to 'Iconoclastic' dynasty: rupture with West inevitable.

His duties were so obvious, defence and restoration in the provinces really controlled from Byzantium, that he has scanty respect for a distant territory which he had not time to visit, and a distant Church which he could not understand. Iconoclasm saved the East, and infused new vigour into the commonwealth; but it lost the Western provinces. No one could have set about the task of estranging these from the centre with clearer or more pertinacious policy. The two most masterful personalities of this age showed no inclination to conciliate or coerce their rebels. We are astonished at the indifference of Leo III. and Constantine V. to the gradual separation of the Western realm. Just a century before, Constans III. had pursued the not altogether visionary design of reducing the whole of Italy under the empire. Nothing but his early death, and the urgency of the Eastern peril, prevented a serious attempt to recover and to consolidate the lost provinces. But with Constans expired the last Roman emperor who had viewed his ancient capital. Constantine IV. was fully engaged in the not inglorious work of defence. The violent and wayward Justinian II. received friendly visits from Greek pontiffs of Rome; but the anarchy of the century's early years seems to have extinguished all sympathy with the Roman subjects in Italy.

We are tempted sometimes to believe that the blunt soldier knew nothing of the older Rome and its imperial legend, so complete is his indifference. And again, we seem to detect a wise policy of consolidation, which in the interests of the larger part can surrender

Great debt to 'Iconoclastic' dynasty: rupture with West inevitable.

the useless or the diseased: "*Ense recidendum est ne pars sincera trahatur.*" At another time we see merely the stern necessity of the emperor's position, which bound him to the supreme task of defending the city of Constantine, and reviving something of the old vigorous spirit. He could not help if in so doing he had no forces left to protect the West, and no sympathy with a religious creed in complete alliance with the enemies of his patriotic policy at home. It is quite possible that we waste our time in seeking to analyse ignorance or impute motive. The exarchate had long been in practice independent; and very imperfect information filtered through to the central government, by routes equally perilous perhaps by land or sea. In spite of the predominance of Hellenes on the chair of Peter, we have already remarked on the notable estrangement or divergence of interests, papal and imperial. The Pope looked westward and northward; he could not expect effective protection from a distant sovereign, who perhaps found that these provinces did not reimburse their maintenance. The militia and the civil and religious government of Rome had for some time tended towards complete autonomy. Iconoclasm was the ultimate cause of a disruption, which was in any case inevitable under emperors of Syrian descent, to whom the records and renown of ancient and of Christian Rome were little more than a name.

The two periods: reorganisation and enjoyment.

§ 3. The period covered by these reigns may be divided into two unequal halves. Constantine V. carried on with unwearied perseverance the policy of his father; and for sixty years there was a steady reconstruction, which the prejudice of the Catholics cannot disguise. This epoch of vigorous revival, as we so often find in Byzantine history, is succeeded by a time of quiet conservatism; in which the empire is feeding upon its resources, without adding to its capital or its strength. Of such a character were the years covered by the invalid but high-spirited Leo IV., the minority and brief personal rule of his son,

and the bold usurpation of Irene; which in a short space upset the principles and calculations of the "Isaurian" family, and paid off the grudge which the Greek race and the Catholic Church bore against this foreign dominion. For rather more than a quarter of a century (775–802) the realm remained content with the peaceful enjoyment of the re-established order. We are thus, in our survey, mainly concerned with the former; how well the work was done may be seen in the prosperity, betokened in the latter by the overflowing treasury, the palace intrigue, the government of chamberlains. Such petty interests or feuds, such pacific rulers, are the unvarying harbingers or attendants of a conservative reaction, the certain tokens of peace, contentment, and abundance. They succeed and flourish after a period of unnatural vigour; while at the time of crisis or peril they fall discreetly into the background. So, on the death of the first and of the second Basil, we have the amiable but autocratic reigns of luxurious sovereigns, who in the immortal words of Ammianus, may be said to have possessed *some* influence with their chief ministers. The rule of the palace succeeded to the drumhead court-martial in the open camp; the regular visits of the tax-gatherer supplant the patriotic call of the recruiting sergeant. It is not Amurath who "to Amurath succeeds," but Honorius to Theodosius, or Constantius II. to Constantine the Great. It is thus that every Oriental dynasty runs its course; but we may point out once more that the "Roman" families felt less than any other the lulling influence of this conservative security. There was no unquestioning homage paid to descent and birth; each prince had to make good his claim to be the worthy representative of the great abstraction, ἡ τῶν Ῥωμαίων πολιτεία. Constantine VI., with whose swarthy and low-browed countenance we are familiar as he presides at the Great Council of 787,—is as brave as his grandfather; and issues forth as a matter of course to hard campaigns on the Eastern or the Northern frontier.

The two periods: reorganisation and enjoyment.

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What sort of character was ruined by the neglect or deliberate ill-will of a mother, we can only guess; nor can we say how far a life was blighted by the failure of a boyish romance. But there is some reason to believe that he would have showed the same vigour and personal spirit that marked the earlier members of his house; and that a good ruler was spoiled in the disappointed suitor of Rotrud, in the reluctant husband of Maria. We may then leave this latter period and turn our notice once more to the years between 717 and 775 when the empire was being slowly and painfully built up again into integrity.

Pressing needs; army, finance, laws: 'Thematic' system.

The chief positive work of Leo III. and his son besides the obvious and permanent duty of frontier-defence was to reorganise the armies, the finance, the laws of the State. We are too much inclined to look on the negative features of Iconoclasm,—its war against the externals of religion, its want of sympathy with the strictly Roman or strictly Catholic tradition, —its persecution of the celibates, its tame surrender of the exarchate and the older capital. But within the reduced and manageable limits of the new empire of the eighth century, an achievement of untiring energy and hope was being carried forward,—often hidden behind the malice or the silence of biassed historians.

It is not our purpose in this wide and sweeping survey of the Iconoclastic period to enter closely into the fascinating and intricate problems of the Thematic system. It will be enough to lay down as established one or two conclusions for which we may assume sufficient proof. The civil administration under Diocletian's hierarchy had almost vanished in the anarchy of Phocas (602–610). The central authority, already weakened by the very proclamation of its absolutism under Justinian, and soon by the removal of the absolute monarch himself, had been powerless to control its own agents. Both orders of the State-service showed an entirely mutinous spirit during the last years of the sixth century. We have

yet to learn that Phocas made any pretence at government; and the foreign inroads, confining the imperial influence to the bare walls of the capital, may well have united to dislocate and to overthrow a pacific and equitable rule, which had been successful in very different times. Heraclius, who was destined to reconquer one half of the empire and lose the other, substituted martial law throughout the provinces. I do not say that the whole calculated system of Themes was completed or even consciously adopted in his reign; but the natural rudiments were there in the very nature of the case. Nothing is clearer than the strict indebtedness of Leo III.'s reforms to a previous policy or tendency. Like Diocletian, he adapted material already lying ready to his hands, into a building of which other architects had drawn a sketchy yet suggestive outline. The paramount importance of military directness and responsibility was recognised by the able monarchs of the seventh and eighth centuries; the *imperium* reposed once more on the power of the legions and the loyalty of the troops. And these might again begin to claim the proud title of national and citizen forces. First, as an obvious measure, permanent local armies were placed in the reclaimed territory under capable leaders, for the purpose of provincial defence. Next, by an insidious but inevitable process, the general in charge either ousted the civilian "judge"; or combined, as in the earlier Roman system, the duties of military champion and civil arbiter. These regional armies gave their name to the departments; and the titles familiar to the war-office became the names of geographical and administrative areas. We may contrast this wise, durable system with the tumultuary levies of the age of Justinian and Belisarius; with the seditious and exacting soldiers of the time of Mauricius. Necessity introduced its early adoption; prudence recommended its maintenance; and sagacious policy reduced it to a complete formula,—such as we have it throughout the eighth and ninth

Pressing needs; army, finance, laws: 'Thematic' system.

centuries,—such as we have it in the flattering and somewhat archaic survey of Constantine VII.

Finance: personal control of sovereign: on the whole beneficial.

§ 4. Closely connected with the reconstruction of the imperial defences was the care bestowed upon finance. The principle of centralism and unique authority, as in a well-ordered camp, was here too invoked; the emperors henceforward are their own ministers of finance. Taxation (as Bury shrewdly suspects) had an attraction for the masterful mind of Constans III., who stoutly upheld the Roman ideal of personal government against the abuses of indolence and of delegation. The "Count of the Sacred Largesses" disappears noiselessly, and his place is taken by the "Logothet" (destined to rise to the throne in Nicephorus the Arabian, 802). We may suppose that this change implied the transformation of a splendid and "illustrious" official into a mere secretary of the imperial pleasure. Certain it is that the control of the exchequer, weakened as early as Justinian's reign by the irresponsible oppression of the Cappadocian, was restored once more to the sovereign.

It is equally clear that the change was for the better. Throughout the imperial history, the chief magistrate stood for the universal interest and the people's advantage; but never more conspicuously than under the Iconoclasts. The wealth and abundance of the following centuries, the very evils of luxury, when childish and impatient hands stretched out to pluck the ripe fruits of the present without thought for the future,—are striking testimony to the wisdom and efficacy of the financial system, which we must dimly surmise from scattered evidence. The condition of the "contributors" (*συντελεῖς, ὑποτελεῖς*) was brought under the direct cognisance of the sovereign; and there is clear proof of wise and minute solicitude for their welfare in the Isaurian laws.

For Leo III. simplified and adapted them for the altered times and the new inhabitants of the realm. Hitherto, responsibility for the amount assessed fell heavily on the local authorities. The *Curia* had

pursued its steadily decadent path since the time of Constantine and Theodosius; the one aim of the privileged bankrupt was to escape from durance, of the government to keep him a prisoner. While a hasty critic might censure Leo for a prejudicial encroachment on local rights and a fatal step towards a malignant centralism,—we must conceive that the surrender of the "publicans'" office to a regular body of State officials, was hailed by the cities as a measure of profound relief. So long as the vigilance of the monarch over the most important department in a civilised State lasted unimpaired, the relief continued; but as in all unduly centralised government, too much depends on the personal energy and unflagging patience of the titular ruler. The emperor had through past ages secured his unique position by his "infinite capacity for taking pains"; just as the lasting achievement of Napoleon's genius is not an ambitious reconstruction of the map of Europe, but the minutely centralised government which exists down to the present day in France. This tendency to gather into one's own hand the tangled webs of disordered rule, is a temptation that comes strongly to an industrious and conscientious man. We may sometimes indeed question whether the bad princes like Domitian, who appointed good governors, did not deserve better of the State than untiring believers in the "eye of the master." If we are to take a modern instance, a great ruler of a public school is not necessarily one who either teaches or administers or controls in person; and it is a mark of an oversensitive conscience or of supreme vanity, when a chief in any sphere of life sinks to the rôle of a perpetual watch-dog or a permanent typewriter. Yet we cannot question that the measures of Leo III. suited his time; his masterful and interfering alertness was as welcome and acceptable to the ideas of Roman monarchy, as the whole-hearted aloofness of a British sovereign from the details of strictly domestic politics. Quite evidently, the mass of the "Romans"

Finance: personal control of sovereign: on the whole beneficial.

Finance: personal control of sovereign: on the whole beneficial.

distrusted no agency so much as themselves; and no one was more popular than the sovereign who did *everything:* although at rare intervals we have the opposite motive for popular idolatry;—affection for a monarch who like Theodosius II. or Constantine VII. did *nothing*.

Law: religious influence supplants classic equity: simplification to suit new subjects.

§ 5. The most striking evidence of the empire's internal condition is to be found in the legislation of Leo III. Here again, he is no violent innovator, rather a "restorer of ancient paths." He simplifies the Justinian codes, in large part unused, inapplicable, or out of date: to cull the vigorous simile of Tertullian of Carthage, he passes the "axe of the imperial warrant through the tangled thicket and overgrown brushwood of prætor's law." Yet he is in one sense only an original lawgiver; for his *agricultural* and *maritime* codes have well and justly been styled "registers of custom" rather than "novels." This is the new and Christian or rather ecclesiastical spirit which animates and pervades this new edition. Under Justinian the tone is "still profoundly classical and pagan." It is no longer nature or reason or equity, to which appeal is made to provide an ultimate sanction, but the authority of Revelation; social relations take on a peculiarly Christian garb, and the final arbitrament is neither usage nor the "rights of man" nor the reasonableness of the sage, but the word of God and the tradition of the Church. It behoves us then to be careful in representing the overt "Protestantism" of Leo III. as the sceptical or humanitarian defiance of some ancient Joseph II., primed with the vague enthusiasm of the enlightenment. Even the wild heterodoxy or cynical carelessness of his son (740–775) never implied a denial of Christianity; only of the churchly or hieratic form, which despised the Scriptures, deified tradition and the Blessed Virgin, and emptied the State and the army of capable men. Whether we take Heraclius I. or Leo III. as the "doorkeeper" who admits us to Byzantine mediævalism, it is clear that Leo III. especially is the child

of his age. He is no Frederic II. in spite of the charges of the priestly historians. No doubt, like many religious reformers, he saw in himself the destined recaller of apostolical simplicity, of the pure gospel: he had a military and perhaps Armenian aversion to the worship of relics and of the Cross. A pregnant phrase of Bury reminds us of his mountainous origin;—he was indeed sprung from "sturdy highlanders averse to symbolism." He is therefore not the Joseph II. but the Cromwell of the imperial line.

Law: religious influence supplants classic equity: simplification to suit new subjects.

It is not too much to say that he secured a new lease of life for Roman law. In the turmoil of the Heraclian reconstruction, we dimly descry a condition of society to which only the sword or the strong hand could apply. We read with amused wonder the complaints of Laurentius on the decline of the litigious and quarrelsome spirit, which forms a conspicuous feature of the "classical" age. This emptiness and perpetual "vacation" of the courts may be a good or a bad symptom. It may merely imply a decay in the irritable and narrow civic life, which in the larger horizon of the empire was no longer the chief pride of the citizen; the influx of foreigners, bringing with them tribal code and usages, thinking scorn (like the conservative schoolboy amongst us to-day) of a constant and whining appeal to authority for the settlement of trifling disputes. It may no doubt also tell of the interrupted communication of a disturbed period; of frequent breaches of regular routine in court-sessions, even in the appointment of the governors, whose chief duty and pride it used to be amid more peaceful circumstances, to "tell the law." But lastly, and the worst symptom of all;—it may involve such entire distrust in the equity of the judge, that like St. Paul advertising his converts, men admonished themselves not to implead one another before unbelievers. Indeed, there appears reason to believe, whatever the precise cause, that the systematic administration of law was in practical abeyance; and that local usage or tribal custom

Law: religious influence supplants classic equity: simplification to suit new subjects.

had taken its place; while in the infrequent field of imperial decisions, caprice and "good pleasure" had usurped the function of impersonal equity. It is recorded of Septimius Severus with marked disapproval, that he transferred suits from the openness of the forum to the secrecy of the palace; and it is said of a very different ruler, the present Czar of Russia, that justice has been to some extent unsettled by the constant "evocation" of important cases before a higher, and in the end arbitrary, tribunal. It was the special pride of the Romans that their prince ruled by law and not captious predilection; and it is significant of the spirit of the unlimited prerogative, that the greatest personal ruler Justinian is also the one who reduced to order the methods and the codes of administration; and, in so far as it was possible, invented by autocratic will remedies and checks to the abuse of autocratic power.

Agriculture: disappearance of serfs: precise limit of class interest and function firmly drawn.

§ 6. The practical and adaptive character of the Leonine reforms is well seen in this *simplified* jurisprudence. It has been ably pointed out by M. Skabalonovitch that the religious prejudice of the later "Basilians" led to the "anachronistic resuscitation" of laws, which could no longer be applied to the special case. It is from the *Ecloga* that we gather precious details of knowledge on the state of the empire, the condition and prospects of agriculture,—indeed, upon the conscious ideal pursued by the frank and straightforward soldier, who saw that an emperor's duty was to defend and to recover lost dominion, to regard State-custom as a guide, and to err on the side of indulgence. As to the picture of rustic life unveiled by the *Georgics*, we must content ourselves with briefly pointing out the gradual but certain disappearance of glebal serfdom,—the probable extinction of the "colonies" in the northern and eastern inroads of two hundred years,—their replacement by Sclavonic settlers in peasant communities or by vast estates tilled by barbarians. The peril of the empire had largely contributed to this

emancipation: the armies were again filled by those who exchanged the precarious career of husbandry for the certain dignity and possible prizes of military life. And we may here remark, that the soldier is again fixed by definite legislation within the precise limits of his profession; he is forbidden to devote his leisure to other avocations, the pursuit of the merchant or the farmer; he can no longer stand surety. Thus the "high calling" of the Christian soldier is marked off clearly from the other social ranks or classes; and while our Protestant zealots resent the aspersions of the orthodox on the murderous business and heinous sin of the warrior, they are quite prepared to make his discipline strict and to consider even a charge of adultery a sentence of dismissal. The same practical aim is seen in Leo's decisive movements against the Thracian bandits,—men of a type by no means infrequent even in our own time. Like the "Bagaudæ" of Gaul in the disorder of the third century, the Scamars had profited by the foreign preoccupation of the emperors in the seventh, to establish prosperous brigand communities. Leo and his son pursue these with ferocious resolve and unprecedented cruelty; for the methods of Byzantine penalties, though they have not reached the mildness of the Amorian epoch, are still far more humane than contemporary codes or indeed any that have prevailed down to a quite recent period.

Agriculture: disappearance of serfs: precise limit of class interest and function firmly drawn.

We cannot dismiss this period without tracing in it one at least of the chief clues or interests we have set before us,—the character and "personnel" of the agents of government. Recognising even in the surprising activity of the direct imperial control, the need felt by the autocrat for loyal friends and trusty delegates,—we attempt in each epoch to trace where lies or slumbers the nominal sovereignty, where the real and effective influence operates in a demure disguise. And in the functionaries of the reign of Leo III. or of Irene, is the same difference that we have already pointed out in the character and spirit

Agriculture: disappearance of serfs: precise limit of class interest and function firmly drawn.

of the time. The early dignitaries of Leo III. remind us of a "family compact"; and the power bestowed on Artavasdus, general of the "Obsicians," will have a dangerous issue on the demise of the crown and amid the uncertainty of the transmission of the sceptre. We may hazard and surmise that in the long and prosperous reign of Leo III. two classes had become permanently disaffected,—the orthodox and the old aristocracy. It is impossible to trace positively in the revolt and "tyranny" of this Armenian kinsman a mutinous scheme against the firmness of a wise and simple autocrat. He may have placed himself at the head of the party of privileged nobility. He might lavish promises of a limited and constitutional sway while the issue was doubtful, which he had no intention of fulfilling after success. But again, this tumult may be nothing but vaulting ambition, backed by popularity with the soldiers under Artavasdus' command,—a lesson of the *danger* as well as of necessity of standing armies. We cannot determine whether this usurper represents any interest but his own. Nor again is it easy to determine the precise cause of the unusual solemnity which attended Leo IV.'s appeal to the people; when from representatives of every class he demands and obtains allegiance to his infant son,—the future Constantine VI.

Energy cools in later years of dynasty: significant features: eunuchs in command, Cæsars in seclusion: anti-Germanic policy of chamberlains.

§ 7. Certain it is that in the great prosperity and undoubtedly buoyant trade of the sea-girt realm during the last quarter of the eighth century, the open-air interest of the earlier "Isaurian" reigns vanishes into the seraglio,—into the apartments set aside for the use of the titular Cæsars and *nobilissimi;* whose dignities, like the skill of the informer, were prejudicial to many and in the end to themselves. Here once more, we are not justified in tracing any certain policy or principle underlying or inspiring the constant plots to substitute the uncles for the nephew. With the accession of a minor and an empress-regent, we are of course treated to the spectacle of an empire ruled from the zenana, from behind the "purdah."

Energy cools in later years of dynasty: significant features: eunuchs in command, Cæsars in seclusion anti-Germanic policy of chamberlains.

The years immediately before the salutation of Charlemagne are marked by a sensible cooling of imperial energy, by the decay of that great ideal of the chief magistrate of the commonwealth, which each and every member of the African or the Syrian house had tried so bravely to realise. The seat of government, the real font of authority, retreats into the waiting-rooms of eunuch-chamberlains. No more scions of the reigning family are entrusted with posts of high command. Irene the regent remembers the success of Narses in a field where Belisarius himself had been baffled. A eunuch-general is sent from the tiring-chambers of the palace to take command against Elpidius, a Sicilian rebel. The entire regency and reign of Irene (briefly separated by the sole rule of the brave and wayward Constantine VI.), comprises not the great matters of universal interest, but the feuds of menials, the shifting influences of the servants' hall. Irene's favourites, such as led her white-horsed chariot with humble haughtiness on rare public progress, make of the duties and the profit of administration a monopoly. The career of the Eunuch-Patrician Stauracius, Grand Logothet of the Course, or Postmaster General, is an instructive chapter in Oriental manners; it can find a parallel in any century and in any court east or south of the Danube. We have travelled far from the old Roman ideal; we have acquired, as in the reign of Antoninus the Eighth and Last, a profoundly debased "Orientation"! Yet it would be unfair to disparage the services of these strange ministers of a free people. We have not infrequently to chronicle the real valiance or the adroit strategy of some menial commander suddenly called upon to confront the foe;—abandoning, as Juvenal would say, the unreal and imaginary rivalries of the court for serious duties and honest warfare. Stauracius defeats the Sclavonians; and is embroiled with a brother in celibacy and in power, Aëtius, whose name strangely recalls the statesman and general of Galla Placidia's regency, whom some style the "last

Energy cools in later years of dynasty: significant features: eunuchs in command, Cæsars in seclusion: anti-Germanic policy of chamberlains.

of the Romans." The result of the quarrel is s singular that it is worth admitting to a place eve in this abstract and general section. Here is one those strange facts to which the historian, as h eagerly searches for fitful illumination, is tempte to attach serious meaning. A *silentium* is hel and all military persons are forbidden to hold an intercourse with the minister. Was then this vigorou limit of frontier maintained even under Irene? wa it possible for a palace official, without losing hi civil rank or falling into disgrace, to be prohibite from communication with the staff-corps? if so, wha was the meaning of this strange precaution, and wha was to be apprehended from the intrigues of Staura cius? Soon after he dies, without serious or pe manent loss of favour, and his rival succeeds to place which, like our prime minister, at last seems t receive official recognition and an authentic place i the hierarchy. The "*παραδυναστεύων*" is well know already in Byzantine historians, but it appears wort while at this point to chronicle gravely the successio of an empress's favourites, just as in later times th vicissitudes of the king's mistresses. Aëtius become "grand vizier"; and forms one of the capable bu time-serving cabal of immediate menials, who finall in 802 deposed Irene and gave the empire to Nic phorus by a bloodless revolution.

As to their sinister influence on affairs, a singula feature must be noted before we leave the grandeu and the pettiness of the "Isaurian" age. It will h remembered that it was the steady and perseverin influence of the invertebrate quadrisyllables of th Ravennese recluse, that ruined the promising chance of an alliance with Alaric before the siege, or at lea before the capture, of Rome. Opinions may indee differ as to the wisdom of that alliance. I make n secret of my firm conviction that the Visigoths we prepared to meet a straightforward prince more tha half-way with genuine and much-needed loyalt Rome and the West never recovered the prestige lo

by that greatest event of the fifth century, which echoed, as we know, through the meditations of the distant anchorite in the cave of Bethlehem. And once more the intrigues of the household favourite spoil a scheme for the union of the East and Western realms, by the marriage of Charles with Irene. The whole disposition of Constantine had been warped and embittered by the failure of that earlier proposal, which had so strongly caught the ardent and romantic imaginations of a boy. The sedate and mature Irene was perhaps not seriously tempted by the subsequent offer; but the failure of the design lies at the door of the chamberlains, who saw perhaps in the frank authority of the new and warlike husband the doom of their own influence. As to the prudence of their intervention, I am not so clear. We tread on more uncertain ground when we discuss not the relation of a suzerain to a vain, powerful, and obviously sincere vassal in Alaric, but the question of a sympathetic union of Aachen and the city of Constantine. The capitals of East and West were to remain for several centuries longer in a complete isolation; indeed, the barriers were only broken down by the marauding host that styled itself the Fourth Crusade, by the most ancient and most loudly protesting feudatory in the Adriatic.—With this singular proffer and strange thwarting influence, we terminate this survey of the turning-period (if I may use the term) of the Byzantine annals. The "Isaurian" dynasty is not merely the most important link in the chain which binds Basil II. and Alexius to Constantine and Justinian; but there goes out to it a sincere feeling of gratitude from Western and Christian hearts, deep as our sense of indebtedness to Charles Martel himself. The appointed sentinel of Europe never performed its duty better or more loyally than during the eighth century; and for this vigilant attitude we must thank the bold highland spirit and the Armenian Protestantism of Leo and his son.

Energy cools in later years of dynasty: significant features: eunuchs in command, Cæsars in seclusion: anti-Germanic policy of chamberlains.

CHAPTER II

THE PRETENDERS, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DYNASTY OF PHRYGIA (820–919 A.D.)

	NICEPHORUS I. (Arab)	802–811	palace conspir.
	STAURACIUS (son)	811	birth.
	MICHAEL I. (bro.-in-law)	811–813	FEMALE right.
	LEO V. (Armenian)	813–820	milit. nom.
M.	The House of Amorium, or the Phrygian Dynasty:		
	MICHAEL II.	820–829	milit. conspir.
	THEOPHILUS (son)	829–842	birth.
	MICHAEL III. (son)	842–867	birth.
	BASILIUS I.	867–886	co-opt.
	LEO VI. (son of Mich. III.)	886–911	birth.
{	ALEXANDER (son of Basil I.)	911–912	birth.
{	CONSTANTINUS VII. (son of Leo VI.)	912–959	birth.

State consistently distrusts family influence: eunuchs in East, celibate churchmen in West.

§ 1. TWICE only in the long annals of the empire was the sceptre swayed by a female sovereign in name as well as in fact. The accomplished Athenian Irene, regent for the sixth Constantine, kept her place for nearly five years, and yielded to an obscure palace-revolution (797–802): Theodora, daughter of Constantine IX., more happy, died in the full enjoyment of her dignity, after a brief but prosperous reign, 1054–1056 (although tradition asserts that she was vexed and astonished at the claim made upon her by dotage and by death). For the obscurer influence of feminine intrigue we need look no further than the competent Syrian ladies, who named emperors and guided affairs in the first thirty years of the third century; than the sister-regent and empress-mother of the fifth century,—than the strange and restless career of Verina, or the almost mythical figure of the first Theodora. Such influence follows naturally on the stationary character of sovereignty. When as with Trajan or Hadrian, the emperor moves among his troops along the frontiers, in actual or anticipated cam-

paigns,—or like some German suzerain conceives that a ruler's chief duty is to form an itinerant Court of Final Appeal,—there in the nature of the circumstance is female interest on the wane. But in the peaceful interludes and occasional minorities, in the centred palace-sway, there was room for the policy and adroitness of the sex. It may be that Justinian owed not merely his throne but his lasting and imperishable renown to the daring advice of a woman. The Western realm, just a century earlier, is perhaps indebted for its very existence to the supple firmness of Placidia, widow of a Gothic king and a Roman emperor, and mother of the last of the Theodosian and Valentinian house. But in these fifteen centuries, barely seven years is marked by an empress reigning alone in her own right. And whatever might have been the genuine or feigned indignation of the West, it is clear that the accession of the queen-regent in the last years of the eighth century excited among her direct subjects no resentment. The great machinery of administration moved on its predestined path, quite indifferent to the altered title, sex, and age of the *primum mobile;* and indeed Irene herself in the full enjoyment of nominal absolutism must have felt the shrinkage of her former influence. In the stirring times and serious perils of the Heraclian and "Isaurian" families, the older ideal of the monarch had been revived. He was personally charged with the whole burden of the State and bore on his shoulders the weight of civil and military responsibility. But with the advent of peace and security, comes the weakening of fibre and the relaxing of interest. Nothing is so creditable as the Roman conception and performance of public service; nothing so curiously incongruous as the pastimes of their frittered leisure or enforced retirement. Yet while the noble abandoned all the manlier virtues and real business of life (whether ousted by his own sloth or another's envy), the principate, as we have so often remarked, never lost except for a brief season the

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strenuous personal character of its duties. With the crises of the seventh century the military power of the long secluded sovereign once more emerges; or to speak more truly, the only possible sovereign is a competent general.

For nearly two centuries the Byzantine sovereigns were accustomed to the light of day and the dangerous intercourse of a camp; and we are quite of Finlay's opinion that the last "Isaurian" sovereign showed to better advantage among his soldiers than his courtiers. But that epoch of vigorous personalities has now closed; and the advent of Irene is significant of a change that will come later and in more definite form after the two most prosperous centuries of the Eastern realm. Like Constantine IX., the luxurious brother of the warlike monk Basil II., Irene can only see with the eyes and hear with the ears of her attendants. As in China of to-day, the scruples of an Asiatic mind confined the privilege of the immediate personal service to eunuchs; just as (for quite other reasons) the chancelleries and civil jurisdictions, as well as autonomous bishoprics, fell in the West to the voluntary celibate. It is not difficult to explain this preference by some motive a little more profound than an obvious precaution. The whole tendency of the State is to destroy all associations but itself, even the family. The central power, whencesoever it may claim to derive its title, prefers to confront isolated units, disintegrated atoms. The truth of this may be proved in the ceaseless warfare which the New Monarchy waged against intermediate corporations when at the close of the Middle Ages the ancient conception of the State revived. A Liberal minister in the beginning of the twentieth century may perhaps sincerely deprecate the expression "children of the State"; yet he is in virtue of his training, circumstance, and often inexplicit conviction, carried irresistibly into the ranks arrayed against the Family. The earliest and greatest political "Utopia" contemplates its destruction; and it is quite plain that there is but

a single great obstacle to the establishment of centralised absolutism in favour of scientific Socialists;—the prejudice and tenacity of human instinct. The imperial system and the Roman Church are in their several spheres the grandest and most consistent application of this principle, hostile to the claims and favouritism of the family. Both desire the widest and most unfettered freedom of choice; their trusted agents and commissaries must be men of personal and individual merit, and must derive their sole recommendation from the State. In the later post-Reformation Absolutism (synchronising with and largely depending upon the success of Protestant belief and the removal of a strong rival to the secular power), the unknown birth of some capable Melchizedek and complete independence of family suggestion, was a passport to highest office. For the new Machiavellian commonwealth, by immaterial accident monarchic, Socialist, or Cæsarian,—has a profound distaste for genealogies and for the founding of families of territorial influence, commercial success or political prestige.

State consistently distrusts family influence: eunuchs in East, celibate churchmen in West.

In our own period the resentment of the Roman critics and historians is constantly directed against the unrecognised power of the palace chamberlains. Their crafty and secret control of the webs that converged in the palace and once more ramified abroad, was distracted by no rival sympathies; they would give affairs their whole-hearted devotion. As peril and menace surrounded the Eastern realm, the middle-class vanished, and left the territorial magnate and his clients or colonists in possession of the field. The very limited scope of well-meaning reform is shown in this fatal tendency of property as of political power to centralise and to accumulate. The Eastern half of the old Roman realm has its story of feudalism as well as the Western. At different periods, nations wake to the danger of land or riches massed in a few hands; of the extrusion of the small proprietor or tradesman in direct relation to the State;

State consistently distrusts family influence: eunuchs in East, celibate churchmen in West.

of the secret and rival organisation which, careless of so-called political influence, really sways at will the whole social life. It may take the form of the local predominance of a family, the founding of some mediæval principality; or of a mercantile committee or combination; or of some unauthorised understanding of social influences, which in spite of all the adroit machinery of a democratic State, might very well nonplus the efforts of reformers by a frank and cynical *non-possumus*.

Triumph of the ideal theory of the State: government by disinterested aliens.

§ 2. The typical chamberlain of an Oriental court will found no family; in him, whether under Arcadius, or Abdul Hamid II., or Kwang-Su, is pure personal ability considered without respect to a father's place or anticipation of a son's claim to succeed. This is the true "State" ideal; and to be consistent, all rulers of "Utopia" should be well-trained and disinterested aliens. It is a commonplace that nearly all races are under foreign domination; and the ideal administrator, as of the Italian town, is a man without prejudice or partiality, without birthright or hopes of posterity. Of such the later empire availed themselves largely; as the early Cæsars employed their freedmen, or French monarchs substituted for the erratic and irresponsible chivalry of the noble class the fustian competence and obscurity of the *roturier* intendant. What is attractive is the pliable temper and perfect subjection of these instruments, entangled in no meshes of affection or kinship and amenable to no other master or influence. The churchmen-administrators of the Middle Ages represent indeed a somewhat similar phase, but there are obvious points of disagreement. We have already spoken of the schism of public service into the Mediæval Dyarchy of Army and Church,—and the significant heralding signs of this in the distinct departments of the later empire. In effect, the State ceased to be,—as a paramount civil order, holding in leash alike the soldier and the priest. Dimly venerating this distant Ideal,

the two subordinate powers made terms with each other, and the Middle Age is largely the history of this accommodation. Thus it was not jealousy but confidence which reposed the civil duties in episcopal chancellors; or as early as the seventh century surrendered without intending it large royal functions to monastic communities. A closer parallel to the precautionary spirit of the East will be found in the urban and provincial powers of bishops, invented by sovereigns as a useful counterpoise against the magnate, who built up with his clansmen or adopted retainers a hereditary sway. And when the official, spite of his direct relation to a sovereign, purchased or seized a permanent tenure, the bishop or abbot who would found no family was the favourite adviser or guardian of the king.

Triumph of the ideal theory of the State: government by disinterested aliens.

§ 3. The election of Nicephorus (802–811) must have been carried through by means of the same eunuchs who had expressed their devoted loyalty to Irene. The revolution supplanted an imperial lady by a well-trained Minister of Finance; and ended without bloodshed. The extraordinary humanity of the Byzantine court at this time is worthy of remark; and far from exerting the jealous cruelty of a "parvenu," Nicephorus extended a mild and ironical sympathy to all pretenders. Yet the "secret of the empire" is again published to the world, that any one with courage and a few bold adherents may become emperor. The ninth century is marked by the success of usurpers (often of Armenian origin), and by the unexpected renown of one of these temporary monarchs as the founder of the most durable dynasty in the whole of Roman history. We should not be far from the truth if we marked this age by the title, "Epoch of the Pretenders," as we may term the next century "Epoch of the Shogunate." The one title shows the open road and untrammelled candidature; the other the irresistible fascination of a family. It is true that Staurace and Michael I. (811–813), the legendary Theophilus (829–842), and

Chief place open again to the adventurer: indifference of machine to its nominal controller.

Chief place open again to the adventurer: indifference of machine to its nominal controller.

the typical young Cæsar, Michael III. (842–867),—succeed in virtue of the never formulated but well understood rule of family preference. But the most effective sovereigns of the epoch literally rise from the ranks; or seize the sceptre with adventurous hazard before a mildly wondering world. Nicephorus himself continues to be what he was before, the vigilant personal superintendent of the empire's finances; and perhaps behind his selfish ambition lay an unspoken protest against a slackened or a penurious administration. Leo V. the Armenian (813–820) supplants the humble and incapable Michael, who gratefully retires; and the same suspicion attaches to this general as did once attach to Gallus; that he secured the throne by treason on the field and a base understanding with the foe to betray the cause. It must be confessed that the story in either case appears unworthy of credit; and one would be inclined to trust the frank minds of the Anatolic soldiers, who saluted their general and marched to the capital to install him, as so many regiments had done before. Michael II., a Phrygian from Amorium (820–829), is a brother-in-arms and a rival of Leo: to his succession belongs the dramatic tale of the sudden "peripety" from dungeon to throne, which here at least will not bear retelling. But the unpreparedness and caprice of the advent of the sovereign is still more signally illustrated by the career of the "Macedonian" groom, Basil I. (867–886), which displays the almost incredible stability of a centralised system without a centre. We associate the name of this strange sovereign with the tightening of the chains of despotic control, with the final phase in the irrevocable tendency towards absolutism; the prince, long without rival or peer in the executive, now bids a contemptuous farewell to his age-long partner in the task of legislation.

But it may surely be called the choicest irony of history that this change should have been effected by one who was neither a noble, a civilian, nor a

soldier; who possessed neither personal popularity nor family prestige; with whom, outside the narrow circle of Michael's boon-companions, few officials were familiar; none perhaps of the chiefs of the army-corps. I am inclined to believe that the success of Basil's ungrateful crime was largely due not to personal daring but to the very dynastic principle which it overthrew. It may be questioned whether the capital was aware of the massacre of the emperor, or that the naked explicitness and horror of the pitiable story as we have it, represent in any degree the vague rumour and silent suspicion which must have prevailed darkly in Constantinople. A "Cæsar" legitimately created and accepted, would succeed without opposition; and the plausible penitence of Basil, his solemn atonement for the crime, may not have been so public as we are led to believe. In any case, the Church, horrified by the public scandals of Michael's irreligion, welcomed gladly enough an ignorant and a subservient monarch, anxious at the outset to ingratiate himself with all classes,—and above all, with that great clerical body which, in the most degraded times and with the most mistaken motives, represented the frankness and detachment of public opinion, elsewhere sought in vain. We can but regret that just on this occasion the patriarch, who might have been bold as S. Ambrose with the question, "Had Zimri peace?" compounded the felony and assoiled the criminal, without demanding restitution and penance. After a long period of repression, under the revived Iconoclasm of the earlier ninth century,—the Church reasserted her rights. Somewhat after the fashion of John of England, Basil consents or proposes in curiously mediæval spirit, to surrender his crown to the altar and receive it back again, as if by Divine commission as a sacred trust. We who in these latter days are sometimes startled by the swift news of a monarch's violent death are wont to hear the details of the crime within a few hours. But it may be doubted if intelligence

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travelled further than the palace; and the undisputed accession of Basil to full sovereignty might be due to the indifference of the people and the governing class, to the undoubted legitimacy (if caprice) of his appointment, and (among the more pious) to his welcome deference to religion after a curious interlude of ribaldry and excess.

In the annals of Byzantine history, this Sclavonian groom of remote Armenian origin stands as the founder of a dynasty. It must be confessed that he did not occupy the proud position in contemporary eyes. I must admit that the subject is a delicate one, and that children born in wedlock must be accepted by the historian of a royal line as their father's offspring. Yet the evidence is very strong in favour of the continuance of the Phrygian line in the person of Leo VI.,—and not merely a sordid computation of months but the character and temper of the new monarch, his peril at the hands of his putative father, and the universal belief of the time, point to him as the son of Michael III. Not indeed until the pious patience of Constantine VII. was the name of Basil reinstated as the recognised head of the house. This is a matter which is obviously out of the reach of conclusive proof; yet in studying the dynastic succession of Eastern sovereigns we are obliged to mention the painful and indecorous hypothesis. Such it must always remain; yet at the risk of dogmatising on an unpleasant subject, I strongly adhere myself to the belief that the Amorian house expired, not in the gory and pathetic murder of Michael III., but on the honourable imperial couch of Theodora; and that the reign of Basil was a useful but not a serious break in the continuity of the longest of Byzantine dynasties.

§ 4. No particular interest or problem attaches to the succession of Leo VI. (886–911) or his son Constantine VII. who in the darkest of all European centuries sheds a genuine if pedantic lustre upon his throne, his court, and his age. We are approaching

very near the confines of our self-imposed task; for the constitutional changes, which worked a silent revolution in the system without abrupt convulsion, are intimately connected with the seventh, the ninth, the tenth, and the eleventh wearer of the name and the purple of Constantine. The seventh titular together with the long Augustan title of his grandson, held the nominal sceptre for a hundred and seventeen years,—a record approaching the length of the combined reigns of the fourteenth and fifteenth Louis, and outvying the almost Arganthonian duration of the earlier Manchu rulers of China (911–1028). The history of that period must be considered by itself; new features and new problems are presented, closely bound up with the whole question of dynastic succession, with the comparative merits of elective and hereditary rulers. We will here confine ourselves to an epoch of one hundred and ten years. During this time the tiresome and continual interrogation of parvenus, as they offer themselves as fit candidates for the chief place, gives way to a fatigued recognition of legitimacy; which needing with us something like a millennium of kinship and attested genealogy, seemed to be well established in that society in a brief space of fifty years. Our period opened, as we saw, unfavourably for monarchical stability; Stauracius, loudly protesting his detestation of the parental methods, failed to win confidence; and Michael I. succeeding through his wife Procopia (as did Zeno just four and a half centuries back), yielded not merely to the clamour of an insane woman perpetually reminding him on all public occasions of his unfitness, but to his own convictions, and the resolve of the soldiers that the time was not ripe for a too pious and indulgent prince. (Indeed it must be confessed that the period of firmest solidity and splendour coincides with the determined secularism of the Iconoclasts, with the reduction of the Church to a subservient and well-drilled department of the State instead of a co-ordinate and rival

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power, as in the West.) But the close of our period, the accession of the tiny Constantine VII. ushers in the most triumphal epoch of Legitimacy. And amid the strange vicissitudes of the central power, the barbaric and unfamiliar figures that press to the front,—we must inquire what influence lent unlooked-for stability to the system; which veiled the inexpertness of a statesman, and enabled him to recast the principle of sovereignty in a mould of pure absolutism.

We must again point out that two parallel or rather contrary tendencies may be observed in any commonwealth. While the State draws new duties and functions to itself, an increasingly large portion of life falls outside its competence. Every subordinate agency which the State creates, to execute its wishes or to ease its burdens, becomes in time a rival, and perhaps a supplanter. A State may well be centralised in theory, and in practice particularist. The whole drift towards monarchy is not the result of ambition, but is the unconscious work of forces which are strictly social,—love of organised and regular routine and hatred of disorder, prejudice in favour of the concrete and visible. The monarch, like the early Cæsars, attempts to perform in person and without deputy. The eager confidence of the subject imposes ever new burdens; and the delegates multiply, at once the agents and the restraints of sovereign authority. Not that the officials of the empire claimed such uncontrolled liberty as the later Counts secured from the weaker Carolings. But the immunities and "administrative right" which the Byzantine bureaucracy secured, if less formal, were at least as effective. The reigns of these monarchs comprised a struggle for impartial justice; and the Oriental legends of Theophilus, untrue perhaps in the letter, represent accurately enough the current feeling,—that the emperor stood for the people's interest against his own functionaries. The mills of the Byzantine system, like the magic stones in the Norse Saga, ground on when once started, whether the miller was there or not. And by far

the larger part of life, as we said, lay without the direct imperial jurisdiction. Had not centuries of uniform usage crystallised behaviour, class-relation, religious ceremony and belief, the rule of civil promotion and precedence, into hard-and-fast outline? Was it not, even in the most turbulent times, the chief pride of the empire that the arbitrament of civil justice went on unaltered and unprejudiced, amid the quarrels of pretenders or the dread and din of foreign invasion? Thus it comes to pass that the very methods for carrying the central designs into effect, become also the means for curbing its caprice and misuse, for rendering it, in a word, to a great extent, superfluous. The more complicated a government, the less need for the perpetual intervention of the sovereign. Moses, acording to the counsel of Hobab, delegates and divides and finally attenuates authority. Personal government is possible only in the exceptional circumstances of the early empire; or in limited but direct intercourse of family or clan, as in Montenegro of to-day. Elsewhere, wherever despotism is the formula of the constitution, the unique preoccupation of the absolutist is to save absolute power from itself; and to remedy in some measure the incurable paradox of a system, which rests the impersonal State and its destinies upon the erring or ignorant judgment of a single mortal.

Canonisation of Legitimacy: immunity of the hierarchy of power: emperor still stands for people's good, against his own agents.

§ 5. It need not be pointed out that exactly the same course follows (unconsciously) upon the recognition of another and very similar paradox,—popular government. For the whole care of the administration, when once the choice of rulers and the final judgment on political issues is made over to the mob, is directed towards cancelling this dangerous authority by elaborate system of check and countercheck, and by displaying in every dictum and expedient the profoundest distrust for a really popular verdict. Thus it is, as we have so often occasion to remark, that the two most similar forms of government—despotism and democracy, are destined never in effect to attain

Absolutism checks itself; Basilian Centralism = curtailment of direct power.

Absolutism checks itself: Basilian Centralism = curtailment of direct power.

genuine existence; and they are never fully recognised except at their obsequies. The supposed absolutism of the earlier system of Diocletian, providing as in duty bound, against riot and caprice, actually deprived the sovereign of much of his prerogative. From this system of Constantine issues quite naturally the ignorant if conscientious seclusion of Constantius II., the powerless chafing of Gratian and Valentinian II. against alien control, the pious and cloistral retirement of Honorius, Arcadius, and the younger Theodosius. The legal powers of the prefect are extended, although the unique military control is taken away. There lies no appeal to the sovereign in the fourth century; and edicts are full of vain regrets on imperial inability to control imperial agents. While the central reconstruction of the fourth century aims principally at securing the empire against individual caprice, the similar movement of Justinian placed the ideal of government in the vigilance of an elderly civilian, with Philip II.'s unwearied love of administrative routine. The complaints of his nephew and successor, Justin II., show exactly the momentary effect of a well-meant reform, which did not outlast the life or rather the vigour and sanity of its author.

The weak control of the sovereign is never seen so clearly as in the half-century following the death of the greatest of "Illyrian sovereigns." Everywhere decay and decomposition, and a polite but firm resistance of the interested classes to the generous and popular proposals of the emperor. Once more in the latter part of the ninth century, significantly enough under a sovereign *per saltum*, comes this inevitable if mistaken tendency to unify all the threads or wires under a single hand. It is clear that in practice this will lead in all but the one hundredth instance, to the strengthening of precedent and routine. Very few sovereigns have the minute administrative patience for detail which is shown by the illustrious line of Roman emperors: or by Napoleon I., alien recon-

structor of despotic machinery for a spurious republic. To centralise is far more to safeguard from caprice and local usage than to put any fresh or sharper instrument in the hands of a monarch. The greater the theoretical centralism, the wider and more unsympathetic shall we find the departments of State, the more numerous the various hierarchs or hirelings who await with anxious and attentive reverence the expressed will of the sovereign on a matter already long ago settled. Thus we may trace the further step towards absolutism, which the upstart Basil takes, quite as much to the well-grounded apprehension of the imperial council, as to any haughty ambition or active distrust of the previous machinery.

Absolutism checks itself: Basilian Centralism = curtailment of direct power.

§ 6. If in these changes we see rather a limit than an extension of dangerous wilfulness, we may perhaps turn our notice upon a question continually grazed but never penetrated in the course of our survey,—the character, methods, and training of the functionaries of government. For it is undeniable that it is in this later period, especially in the reign of Leo VI., that the archaic features of the old Roman civil service vanished; so stubbornly surviving as a tradition and "secret of the empire," amid the disappearance of nations, the advent of parvenus and the wreck of transient dynasties. It is the fashion to connect the duration of the Eastern empire with the unrivalled discipline and certain promotion of the civilian department. And it is worth while to cast an eye on the development and changes which it underwent. A profession of State-service is found only in highly civilised (it may be, moribund) communities. True democracy modelled on antique citizenship is the apotheosis of the amateur. Specialism, inseparable from a complex social life, has no place in commonwealths, which as opposed to the spurious free states of modern times, can make a genuine boast of freedom. The duties of a simple justice, administration, police, flow without conscious effort, from the natural relation of father,

Decay of careful training in departments of State: anti-democratic influence of the expert.

Decay of careful training in departments of State: anti-democratic influence of the expert.

husband, or brother; the heads of the associated families meet for the discussion of public business; and the titular monarch, who is seen at the dawn of Hellenic, Roman, and Teutonic history, is but "first among peers," and perhaps recalls a semi-divine ancestor and a closer intimacy with divine secrets. It would have been inconceivable for such men to have set up, as servant and master at the same time, an organised body of public officials,—created indeed by the mass of citizens but superior to the individual or capricious will. When the single subjective will overcomes, in Alcibiades or in Catiline, the traditional reverence for the purely moral sanctions of the State, and the two great evils of centrifugal or feudal society emerge,—private war and private greed,—the need of a central arbiter becomes apparent, armed with forcible as well as religious power for the coercion of this impious eccentricity.

The empire attempted this task side by side with the original council of Fathers and of Peers. The growth of the civil service in Rome has been already traced in broad general outlines and in particular detail,—from the freedmen of Claudius, Nero, or Domitian; through the reorganising vigour of the great juristic period of the Antonines; down to the sudden and well-nigh fatal blow to civil government, the murder of Severus II. (235). We have seen that beneath the turbulent surface of the half-century that followed, tranquil depths may be descried where the old routine was still pursued, even amid the alarming aberrations of the central pivot. The hierarchic gradations of the great reform of the fourth century certainly had in view the severance of the civil functionary or bureaucrat (directly amenable to the prefect), not merely from the military contingent, but from the great body of contributing citizens. Thus arose that highly efficient and specialised body of government officials who meet us continually after Constantine, as a distinct class in the State. And indeed, although Plato in the

Republic allows a free passage for ability up and down between the various orders, yet there is observable the same Hegelian maxim, which unconsciously the Roman government adopted, that government should be confined to the circle of officials.

Decay of careful training in departments of State: anti-democratic influence of the expert.

§ 7. Most criticisms of the Roman Empire are an undesigned indictment of the darling projects of modern Socialism. And Socialism entrusting unlimited power to the State (represented as it must be by a committee of experts) is the very denial of free local and personal life. The Roman sovereigns, facing much the same problems as a modern nation, undertook the guard of the frontier, the maintenance of order within, a uniform judicial procedure, and the supply of provisions to the chief centres. It is true that neither religion nor education came within the scope of their solicitude. The empire was, however durable, an artificial creation of beneficence: and the unity between the various tribes, cities, races, and creeds was a fictitious unity that arose from this common relation to the metropolis. From the first the strictly Roman government stood out in clear distinctness from the population. There is no sign that the provinces resented this monopoly; there is evidence enough on both sides to make us hesitate before deciding between a corrupt surrender and a wilful encroachment. This distinct character of a service, which was open to all, is maintained through the whole of Byzantine history. While the Church and its prelates remain Hellenic in temper, metaphysics, and sympathy, the old Roman tradition and character is kept up in that curious Asiatic and Armenian class, who supplied the empire of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries with brave champions and earnest reformers. On this peculiar and it may be artificial product, public virtue and capacity of the older Roman type, Finlay has a passage marked by his usually correct insight, when writing of the "con-

Indictment of empire, a final condemnation of extreme Socialism: State-omnipotence worse, if not embodied in an accessible and responsible monarch.

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version" of Basil II. But a certain change in the highest rank of the hierarchy is to be noticed in this very period we are now discussing: Oriental caprice and not lengthy and tried service fills the chief posts. Below, the subordinate officials maintain their place and duties, but with lessening respect for the chief virtues of a bureaucracy, equity, and a real sympathy with the subject-population. The annalists are full of complaints, which begin in this period of comparative prosperity, of the insolence of officials as a privileged class apart, of the fiscal exactions, and the gradual decay in the distribution of impartial justice. A special section must be devoted to the sad task of reviewing these shortcomings in the imperial agents; and the record is the natural outcome of the extravagant promises made by the empire, and by the very dexterity and competence of the agents which it carefully trained to execute them. But the chief strictures are kept for the suspicious favouritism, which entrusted the principal stations of duty to the nominees of the palace; and the historians who allow themselves the liberty of free reflection, like Psellus and Zonaras, are greatly concerned at the arbitrariness of appointment to the chief places, even if they are not shocked at the barbarian nationality of the candidates. The records of all wide and despotic monarchies are full of instances of this fondness for alien agents—the caliphs, the Seljuks, the Mongols. And the supranational and idealistic Byzantine system is no exception. Gradually, the emperor vested with powers nominally unlimited, cannot afford to place confidence in any one outside his own family or circle of attached servants.

§ 8. The jealous reservation of great offices to kinsmen or to dependent eunuchs is a prominent feature of the later age, but is by no means uncommon in this period, and has its warnings or intimation long before. Did not Vespasian create Titus prefect, and did not Justinian with his unerring sagacity summon

Narses from the shadowed life of a palace to a command which had overtaxed the energies of Belisarius himself? And it is this tendency to identify the State with family or with servile dependents which will wholly alter the lineaments of the liberal empire. The employment of corrupt or ineffective chamberlains on military service will irritate the military caste, which owing to the pacific aims of the prosperous successors of Iconoclasm had suffered both in practice and in prestige. Militant and chivalrous feudalism respects indeed the prejudice for the family, but will have none of those base and supple agents so dear to an apprehensive central power. Hence the veiled but perpetual strife between the Feudal and the Oriental temper; and the open discontent and revolution which succeeds the extinction of the Amorian dynasty. And it must be confessed that the success of the military caste is not reassuring; for with the Comneni the whole ideal and disinterested conception of the State breaks down and gives place to pure "patrimonial" self-seeking, as with the Merwings. For if we seem to anticipate, it is because the reign of the supposed son of Basil (886–911) shows all the later vices of an intermittent and arbitrary government, proceeding without knowledge or any real control of its agents, and of set purpose elevating the civil or palatine official above the military interest. But the succeeding age witnesses a reaction; while the respect due to the "purple-born" is in nowise diminished, the soldier or admiral receives recognition not merely as the highest servant but as the equal of the legitimate sovereign. A period of military glory under Phocas, Tzimisces, and Basil II. himself dispels in the open daylight and peril of the camp the intrigues of a luxurious court. It is this period which will form the subject of our next essay; and we have ventured to call it by the now familiar title of the "Shogunate."

Growth of carelessness and abuses under Leo VI.: strife henceforth between Feudalism and Orientalism, equally self-seeking.

CHAPTER III

THE EPOCH OF THE BYZANTINE "SHOGUNATE"; OR, THE AGE OF MILITARY EXPANSION AND RECOVERY (919–1025 A.D.)

ROMANUS I. LECAPENUS. . .	919–944 .	milit. nom.
STEPHANUS	944 . . .	birth.
CHRISTOPHORUS.		
CONSTANTINUS VIII.		
(CONSTANTINUS VII. (sole) . .	944–959)	
ROMANUS II. (son of Const. VII. grandson of Romanus I.) . . .	959–963 .	birth.
BASILIUS II. (son)	963–1025 .	birth.
CONSTANTINUS IX. (brother) . . .	963–1028 .	birth.
NICEPHORUS II. PHOCAS. . .	963–969 .	milit. nom. and FEMALE right.
JOHANNES II. TZIMISCES (neph.)	969–976 .	palace conspir.

Regency side by side with Legitimacy: efficiency consulted as well as stability.

§ 1. THE last two periods of our survey comprise the obscure phases of a remarkable struggle,—between the interest of the soldier and the civil official, the landed or feudal interest and the court. But the immediate section from the accession of Constantine VII. to the death of Basil II., presents us with an early stage in which the issues and the stakes are not as yet clearly defined. After the slothful and somewhat corrupt peace of Leo VI., there is a strong reaction in favour of a "forward" policy. In spite of the abuses which had crept into the Roman administration, the general prosperity had been great under the Amorians, and the resources had steadily increased. Perhaps the worst indictment of the reign of Leo the Wise is that he was preparing too early to beat his sword into a plowshare, and to enjoy the whole rich imperial realm as his own private domain. Such indeed is the temptation of all youthful monarchs who succeed by an indisputable title without the previous discipline of a private

station. The earlier system of perilous and precarious competition gave way to a frank recognition of hereditary claim,—and indeed Leo might well satisfy in his ambiguous origin both the Amorian and the "Macedonian" faction. In this tenth century the splendour, the culture, and the wealth of the capital and the more favoured provinces, stand out in startling contrast to the miserable and riotous condition of the rest of Europe. It was impossible for a prince brought up as in the "Happy Valley" of Rasselas, amid pleasant sights and sounds, to appreciate the frequent want and distress of the outlying districts. To him favourable bulletins were always issued; and he might well be the most ignorant as well as the most responsible citizen in his dominions. Catherine II. herself found the deceptive atmosphere of a court followed the monarch even on a distant progress; and mistook the stage apparatus which unknowingly she carried among her own luggage,—the maypole, the village-inn, the merry peasants,—for serious evidence of plenty and contentment.

Regency side by side with Legitimacy: efficiency consulted as well as stability.

Yet in spite of the cloistral ignorance of the monarch and the natural decay of institutions which demanded and implied strict personal attention, in spite also of the horrors of the famous capture of Thessalonica in the last years of the reign,—the forces, natural and human and economic, had been slowly and surely recruiting; and in the minority of the youthful son of Leo, the thoughts and sympathies of men turned to more strenuous rule. And inasmuch as the affectionate allegiance of the capital was enlisted for the dynasty and for the helpless minority of Constantine,—the supplanting by a military leader of a palace-cabal was attended by no overthrow or revolution. Yet if the accession of Romanus Lecapenus to power (919) ushers in the period of the Byzantine "Shogunate" and the glorious careers of Phocas, of Tzimisces, and of the legitimate Basil himself,—how strange and anomalous is the circumstance of his triumph and the character of the man!

Regency side by side with Legitimacy: efficiency consulted as well as stability.

Philip the Arabian (244), according to current rumour, had wilfully created a scarcity in the commissariat that he might shift the onus to Gordian III. and take his place: Gallus (251) was suspected of sacrificing his master to the invader that he might himself seize the throne; Leo V. (813) seems to have profited in an unexpected fashion by his own incompetence or doubtful faith in the field; and Lecapenus, after a sorry display of treachery or cowardice, returns in triumph to the capital to play Napoleon to the Directory!

Byzantine history is indeed full of surprises; and we are constantly wondering at the qualities, the policies, and the men whom the wayward citizens delight to honour. But perhaps here is the most surprising instance of inexplicable success; Romanus returns with his fleet to confront, as one might suppose, the painful alternative, a confession of timidity or treason,—is able to dictate his own terms to the palace, to seize the ominous and significant title of Grand Hetæriarch, and in the end to seat himself side by side with the legitimate ruler. This is a strange prelude to the effective and personal chivalry of the three imperial warriors in the remainder of the period. But we are not concerned with the details of this warlike prowess but rather with the political feeling of which it is the chief symptom. Romanus without doubt profited by the general discontent with a feminine regency, by the intrigues which divided the imperial council. He stood for the bluff frankness of a seaman; he had no pretensions to polish; his son-in-law, Constantine himself, speaks of his limited attainments with spiteful contempt; he entered, like a breezy gust of north wind, into the hothouse air. As in the French Republic to-day, it is the hour which cannot find the man; so the way was prepared at Byzantium for any one who had the courage to seize the forelock of Time. Not that a revolution was contemplated; the dynasty was popular and the whole temper

of the age was humane; the leniency of the Byzantine court is never more striking than in this half-century when the rest of Europe is sunk in barbarism. But while no one disputed the rights of the emperor by descent, while on occasion men could loudly complain of the ousting of the heir,—a capable and personal ruler must share the dignity as well as the burden of office.

Regency side by side with Legitimacy: efficiency consulted as well as stability.

§ 2. The unwarrantable elevation of Romanus was a protest against the suspicious secrecy of chamberlain-rule or a divided and incapable regency; it forms one additional proof (if evidence is needed) of the inexorable Roman principle of personal government. And so the solitary and giddy pedestal is thronged with new figures; there are five emperors at the same moment; the young heir, buried in the palace with his books, his music, his painting; the rough sailor Lecapenus learning awkwardly the strict and indispensable formulas of sovereign behaviour; and his three sons, Stephen, Christopher, and Constantine VIII.,—whose ungrateful and ill-timed ambition proved fatal in the course of years to this renewed attempt at an imperial "college." Meantime, the citizens reserved their love for the ruler by "right divine" and resented his seclusion; Romanus, like so many surprising elections in time past, proved a careful and efficient coadjutor,—certainly preferable as a vizier or *παραδυναστεύων*, to an intriguing menial of the palace. We shall draw attention at the suitable moment to his wise policy with regard to the great landowners and the overgrown estates,—which by a tendency not wanting altogether in sound and wholesome features, created a counterweight against the centralised absolutism wielded by the court. But Romanus was lacking in modesty and in moderation; he grasped too eagerly at the entire harvest of his unlooked-for victory. Not content with placing three of his sons on the throne, he made a fourth, Theophylact, still a minor, patriarch of the metropolis.

Astonishing success and greed of Romanus I.: Theophylact and John XII.

It is perhaps no very instructive pastime of the

Astonishing success and greed of Romanus I.: Theophylact and John XII.

historian, to trace vague and secret currents and tendencies, which are as it were "in the air," and exercise over wide areas the same influence without any visible connection or known intercourse. Yet it would be impossible to pass over the career of Theophylact without drawing attention to his—I had almost said, heir and successor in the rival capital, —John XII. So have we seen the type of anomalous prince-prelacy in Sidonius, sportsman, bishop, urban-prefect and consummate stylist, in earlier model at Barca and Cyrene: we find a prototype in Synesius, the Platonist, the priest, the bold rebuker of royalty, the eloquent hymnodist. Our two "prince-bishops" are widely different from the amiable contemporaries of Leo I. and S. Augustine. They are types that can only be met with in a wholly secularised Church; when the apostolic virtues have given way before the wealth and mundane duties, pressing on abundantly, when the chief place is seized as a prize by the feudal cadet. During this tenth century in the older Rome, down to early Teutonic reformations from beyond the Alps under the first and third Otho,—the Holy See loses altogether its sacred and ecumenical character. It is an appanage of the more powerful nobility,—just as in some exiguous English borough a great magnate from his neighbouring castle might control the burgesses' election and nominate his son to the rectory. Under Theophylact, as a few years later under Octavian, son of Alberic, the stable is the centre of attraction for the patriarch. Michael III. had, like Gallienus or Honorius, resented when intent on pleasure the distracting news of a Saracenic inroad, and had actually intermitted or even destroyed the elaborate system of beacon-fires through Lesser Asia. But it was reserved for the patriarch Theophylact to interrupt the service of the cathedral in order to be present at the "accouchement" of a favourite mare. This feudal interlude is of brief duration in New Rome; but it has all the features of the Western type of secularised prelacy,—the same want of apprecia-

tion for the ideal and objective State and Church, the same belief in office as a patrimony and privilege rather than (with antiquity at its best) a difficult trust, the same immersion in innocent but exaggerated country pastimes. It is impossible not to sympathise more with this temper than with the dark or cruel intrigues of priestcraft. Even the modern counterpart, the keen sportsman in the family living, is perhaps more popular than the ascetic celibate however devoted, with whom the priesthood becomes a caste.—In Byzantium, this frank worldliness soon passes away, though Theophylact survived and was tolerated by court and people, for another twelve years after his father's downfall. And he is the unique example of a type common enough in the feudal West.

Astonishing success and greed of Romanus I.: Theophylact and John XII.

§ 3. The foolish and unfilial treason of the three sons of Lecapenus rebounded against themselves. The rights of the reigning family were once more asserted; and for fifteen years Constantine VII. enjoyed the responsibility as well as the title of Augustus. In the reign of his son and successor, Romanus II., the feud between the chiefs of the civilian and military departments again emerges,—Bringas the minister is jealous of Phocas the general. Once more, a vigorous and personal ruler is preferred to an able civil minister; and Phocas and his nephew revive the most brilliant lustre of Roman glory. Once more, a successful general presents himself, as Vespasian or Napoleon, before a wearied or enthusiastic capital. The nephew, who subsequently ended by an abrupt murder the reign of Phocas, insisted on its beginning; the recall of Nicephorus by the minister was the signal for his salutation as emperor. He was in no sense unfaithful as the husband of Theophano to his young step-sons: he became the regent-emperor with full powers during their minority,—perhaps with some implicit understanding as to a voluntary retirement, which unhappily he was never called upon to fulfil. Quite in the manner of the French "majorate" or

Feud of military and civilian castes, Bringas and Nicephorus II.: Basilius and John II.

Feud of military and civilian castes, Bringas and Nicephorus II.: Basilius and John II.

the Japanese "shogunate," this regency bid fair to become as hereditary and as charged with anxiety and peril as the legitimate sovereignty itself. John II. (for we must not forget the *Notarius* who ruled for nearly two years in Ravenna after Honorius, 423–425) supplanted his morose and ascetic uncle by a single crime which indelibly stains a career otherwise almost free from reproach. Under him the policy of expansion is further pursued on the lines set by Nicephorus II.; and it would ill become me to seek to imitate or to rival the graceful and picturesque redundance of the able Frenchmen who record this Indian summer of Byzantine renown. Let us be content with remarking that the same silent duel continues between the civilian interest and the military caste. Legend may usually be trusted for interpreting the spirit and misreading the letter of an epoch; it is a far more valuable guide for the speculative historian than the spiteful scandal or didactic pragmatism of the academic writer. And the death of John II. (969–976) was in popular rumour connected with a frank and unwise remark, on the growing estates of eunuch-chamberlains and palace-favourites. He had passed through fertile but deserted tracts in the heart of the great Asiatic promontory, and on inquiring for the owner of these remarkable estates, heard wearisomely repeated the name of a single imperial servitor, the "Marquis of Carabas" of the folk-story,—who without venture or toil had entered into the labours of the soldier-caste. The usual suspicion of poison is recorded; and the now mature sons of Romanus II. by universal consent take up their rightful heritage.

Personal energy of legitimate monarch: 'conversion' of Basil II. marks epoch.

§ 4. But the tradition that the sovereign reigns but does not govern, dies hard; and the customary attempt is made by the now dominant faction of civilians to immerse the emperors in youthful indulgence. Side by side with the imperial general, the son of Romanus I., the chamberlain-president Basilius, had possessed complete control over the civil administration. It has been contended, not without

reason, that his physical condition alone prevented him from imitating his father's example, and assuming the imperial title. But the times were not favourable to civilian régime, or to the duration of chamberlains' influence. Once more the natural envy of the two departments emerges; and the remainder of the century is occupied by the exploits and open treason of the two Bardas, not with the subtle intrigues of a courtier. A fresh feature of complications had to be reckoned with, in the "conversion" of Basil, the elder of the two brothers. Suddenly he threw off the precedents and traditions of his house, and girt himself up not merely for the task of personal supervision, but for the hardships of the camp and the campaign. The government of Leo VI. nearly a century before may have been despotic in name; but the philosopher was clearly at the mercy of his ministers: though he had the last word to pronounce, it was rarely that he framed the decision, which it expressed. The reign of Constantine VII. had seen a gradual blurring of the sharp outlines of responsible sovereignty. The people regarded the artistic and handsome emperor, born (so short were their memories) of an ancient, "honourable lineage," with a feeling akin to the modern loyalty and affection, entertained by a free nation towards a good-natured ruler who never troubled them. Evils and abuses were put down to the wilfulness of agents and ministers; and the titular monarch is somehow safe throughout this century, though the active regent, even if he bear the title, is held accountable and removed from office, by compulsory retirement or secret assassination. Basil broke the tradition of "constitutional" or perhaps Oriental sovereignty. He reverted to the older usage and became the captain of a victorious army, the relentless pursuer of a hazardous policy. He determined to be both in title and effect, the master; and he emerges the conqueror of the twin and rival departments which had encroached on the personal executive. Exhausted by internecine conflict they

Personal energy of legitimate monarch: 'conversion' of Basil II. marks epoch.

Personal energy of legitimate monarch: 'conversion' of Basil II. marks epoch.

became an easy prey to a ruler who knew his own mind. Yet apart from the magical title of legitimacy and the natural sympathy of a warmhearted people for a boy-king, Basil at first had but little chance of success. The great Byzantine noble-families were inured to the practice of arms. The long security of the Iconoclastic age, while it had not blunted the passion for genuine or artificial celibacy, had conferred a degree of certainty on the transmission of title and estates, which was unknown in the Oriental monarchies and was maintained in feudal Europe only at the point of the sword. And the Armenian and Asiatic magnates, who combined the privileges of landlords and of generals, had acquired in spite of palace intrigues, something of the exemption and immunity which their compeers were just then extorting from the dwindling monarchy of France. The Oriental realm is ignorant of the grades and distinctions of nobility; a pure religious democracy levels up all converts to Islam in order to bow them again in a uniform subservience to God's vicegerent. And in India the social system is entirely independent of the exact political formula of the constitution; it is indeed superior to it and antecedent; and the issues of real import are settled and fixed by immemorial tradition, with which no sovereign, Mussulman or Hindoo, would venture to interfere. Birth in India counts for everything, in China for nothing; and in neither country is there in the strict sense an aristocracy.

Asiatic nobles and the usurpation of Sclerus and Phocas.

§ 5. Although the Roman Empire, being like Islam, in purport and design democratic, waged unceasing warfare with the overweening claims of privilege,—it will be seen that these claims revive from time to time. Immunity and distinct treatment created an exempt class, at variance with that impartial uniformity, which is the highest pride of a civilised State. This class might be composed of spoilt bureaucrats or of chivalrous nobles, whose pastime was war. The great Armenian invasion of the "seats of the mighty" had arisen from the needs of the empire. In the

contest with Islam the old Roman spirit awoke from a long slumber. The Eastern realm caught something of the strenuous tone of Western Christendom. A nobility of the sword was formed, a silent rival of the bureaucracy. Once more, the imperial centralism rose to crush both these subordinate but now wilfully independent delegates of its power. But effective personal government on Roman lines was doomed after the fatal and formal recognition of autocracy under Basil and Leo (867–911). Basil first overpowers the military pretenders Bardas Phocas, Bardas Sclerus, and then turns to rid himself of the wise but irksome tutelage of his namesake. The influence of the Lecapenian family lasted throughout the greater part of the tenth century: and it did not run in the legitimate issue alone. Basilius the chamberlain, a natural son of Romanus I., arms three thousand household slaves like some Clodius of the late republic or baron of mediæval Rome; and he places Nicephorus II. on the throne. He bears uncontested sway in the civil department through the sixteen years of the regent-emperors. He acquired enormous wealth and territory, which he doubtless farmed by the ever-ready supply of Sclavonian colonists. It was rumoured that at his suggestion a poisoned cup was administered to John II., when he tarried at the Asiatic palace of a grandson of Romanus I. Against this powerful minister and king-maker, Basil, now secure of his military rivals, turns his indignation. He was disgraced and his estates were confiscated; henceforth Basil was his own premier and commander-in-chief.

Asiatic nobles and the usurpation of Sclerus and Phocas.

§ 6. The last thirty years of the reign and life of Basil II. were spent in this strenuous personal monarchy. It is not our intention or aim to follow the victorious standards of the highly organised body of natives and mercenaries under a sovereign of Oriental descent, who destroyed the nascent hopes of the new Bulgarian State and nation. This is the last aggressive war of the Roman annals; and it may be, the last really effective attempt to fulfil the imperial ideal.

Monarch's fruitless campaign against family and dynastic influence: feudal discontent with corrupt civilian caprice, ensuing on bellicose era.

Monarch's fruitless campaign against family and dynastic influence: feudal discontent with corrupt civilian caprice, ensuing on bellicose era.

Yet amid these untiring campaigns how large a portion of the administration must have fallen hopelessly outside the cognisance of the emperor! Basil II., besides his achievement as a warrior, may lay claim to the foresight of a genuine statesman,—unavailing though it proved. He follows the anti-feudal policy of his great-grandfather, the first Romanus: he takes measures to discourage the vast castellated mansion, typical of the state and influence of the Asiatic noble. For here was congregated until the inroad of the Seljuks, all that was most vigorous and well-born in the empire. "I am no Roman from Thrace or Macedon, but from the Lesser Asia." Here spread the *latifundia* which, centred in the hands of a few magnates, bound by strong family ties and a common interest,—had replaced the modest estate of the yeoman. Basil may confiscate the estate of Eustathius Maleïnos, and may raze his castle to the ground,—like a later feudal king overcoming particularism and refounding the State.

But he is powerless to arrest the tendency which at certain periods of decadence or of advance destroys the middle-class and the smaller owner.—And the very vigour of this stern but unattractive personal rule has its reaction. We open the records of our last half-century with a consciousness that the value of Basil's example of ascetic and relentless work was lost upon his successors. Caprice, which like "free living" or "free thought" means not power but impotence, not liberty but thraldom, not knowledge but ignorance,—caprice will guide the rare moments when Constantine IX., already some sixty-five years an Augustus, puts his hand to the helm. The question recurs again and again,—Shall the government be efficient or secure? The "Shogunate" of the tenth century provided able rulers, who devoted themselves unsparingly to the public service, while the senior Augustus was shrouded in obscure tranquillity. The world is always witnessing a similar attempt; the bey of Tunis, the "nomokhan" of the

Tibetan theocracy, the prime minister of Nepaul,— are all signs of this attempted compromise. It is impossible to foresee whether the Byzantine administration, still Roman in spirit and tradition, would long have tolerated the pious abstention of the reigning sovereign. Yet the continuance of this dual system might have saved the world from the unhappy gentleness of the ninth and tenth Constantines; and have still ensured the veneration commonly felt for the members of the long-lived but ambiguous dynasty from Phrygia. Basil removed all competitors of military renown or civil capacity; he reigned as unique and unapproachable as Aurelian. His solitary and funereal splendour marks the end of the Roman empire in the strict sense; and we may again remind our readers of the strange prediction of Valens and the commentary of Zonaras. The days for efficient supervision were already numbered. The avenues of certain information were corrupt, the sovereign could not be ubiquitous, and the number of those interested in keeping the emperor aloof from a real world, were too closely allied. His successors, dimly conscious of the serious perils which menaced the State, strove in vain against the current or abandoned in idle leisure the unequal contest. And while the territorial magnate still preserved his semi-independence, the warlike and chivalrous spirit decayed. Basil had destroyed his rivals and had humbled the officious vanity of his minister; but he left no successor to carry on his work. The realms of finance, of justice, or of military equipment, were disorganised; a weak successor and a period of thirty years of female sway were sufficient to exhaust the well-filled treasury, to relax the traditional and systematic frontier-defence, to transform the once dutiful and conscientious civilian into a wolf or a serpent, and to surrender almost without a serious encounter, the last and most flourishing home of the Roman spirit and of a chivalrous feudal nobility,—to the incursions of the Seljuks and the desolating influence of a Turkish government.

Monarch's fruitless campaign against family and dynastic influence: feudal discontent with corrupt civilian caprice, ensuing on bellicose era.

CHAPTER IV

EXTINCTION OF ROMAN TRADITION UNDER THE DAUGHTERS OF CONSTANTINE IX. (1025–1081 A.D.)

ROMANUS III. (son-in-law to Const. IX., husb. to Zoë)	1028–1034	FEMALE right.
MICHAEL IV. (Paphlag.) husb. to Zoë	1034–1041	FEMALE right.
MICHAEL V. (nephew) adopted by Zoë	1041–1042	FEMIN. adopt.
ZOË AND THEODORA (sisters together)	1042	
CONSTANTINUS X. (Monomachus), husb. of Zoë	1042–1054	FEMALE right.
THEODORA (alone) d. of Const. IX.	1054–1056	birth.
MICHAEL VI. (Stratioticus)	1056–1057	FEM. nomin.

N. Prelude of the Comnenian Age and House of Ducas:

ISAACIUS I. (Comnenus)	1057–1059	milit. nom.
CONSTANTINUS XI. (Ducas)	1059–1067	civil. nom.
EUDOCIA, widow and regent for— MICHAEL VII., ANDRONICUS I., CONSTANTINUS XII.	her sons 1067	
ROMANUS IV. (Diogenes), husb. of Eudocia	1068–1071	FEM. right and milit. nom.
MICHAEL VII. (with his brothers)	1071–1078	
CONSTANTINUS XIII. son	1075– ?	
NICEPHORUS (III.) Bryennius		milit. pretend.
NICEPHORUS III. (IV.), Botaniates	1078–1081	milit. pretend.

House of Ducas

Mistaken and unpatriotic policy of civilians: envy of the feudal magnates.

§ 1. WE have now reached the final stage,—the noiseless dissolution of the Roman system. The realm, in spite of the seeming solidity which the successes of Basil had given, was exposed now as always to serious dangers. Still its chief mission was defensive and protective; and there was gathering on the East a new enemy, whose permanent occupancy of the Lesser Asia was far more disgraceful and more formidable than the raids of Persia or the caliphate. In the revival of a warlike spirit among the provincial nobles there lay great promise for the

future; but this was dissipated by distrust, by open neglect of patriotic interests, by the civilian rivals, by intestine feud. The emperors who succeeded Basil II., down to the seizure of the capital by the Comnenians, laid claim to the graces of learning and letters, lived in inglorious ease and became the mere instruments of ministers and females. They betrayed the most apprehensive suspicions of the great military caste, which as we saw had grown up with a curious mixture of Roman courage and public duty, and of chivalrous daring and family pride. The vigilant defence of the frontiers was relaxed by measures of short-sighted parsimony; whole bodies of gratuitous allies were estranged from the service of the empire; and the forces which during the Iconoclastic period had nearly deserved the proud title of a citizen-army, were reduced and starved: to give place to the Varangians and Machlabites who fill the stage with obscure significance after Basil's demise.

Mistaken and unpatriotic policy of civilians: envy of the feudal magnates.

Nor did this emphasis on the civil side of the empire imply a strict and equitable administration of justice, or a fair distribution of burdens. We must complain of the mistaken fiscal system and erroneous methods of later Roman finance; but it is not often that we can charge it with ruinous and wasteful extravagance. But in the fifty years now before us, the resources of the empire were squandered on the capital and the palace; and the footprints of the tax-collector and the publican set exclusively towards the lion's den. It has been pointed out that after Basil had, as it were, "solidified" the Balkan peninsula out of chronic deliquescence, nothing was more essential than a broad and liberal policy towards the new subjects; who had with the easy welcome or careless acquiescence of the age, settled down under their new masters. Yet any device of making the Roman yoke light and acceptable is conspicuously wanting. Both the Byzantine and the Bulgarian monarchies were "governments without a nation," to use Finlay's happy phrase. In the success of Basil

Mistaken and unpatriotic policy of civilians: envy of the feudal magnates.

or of Simeon the mass of the people were no more concerned than in the contest between Belisarius and Vitiges which the cloistered student follows with breathless interest in the pages of Procopius. The divested royal family would rise to Byzantine honours, and the Sclavonian settlers who grazed or tilled the waste places, might have become faithful subjects. Once more, as in the critical days of the Illyrian emperors, the unwieldy peninsula might become under careful management the nursery of soldiers. But the loyalty of the North was not secured; the frontiers of the East were left exposed in the lukewarm attitude of once precious allies; the moneys still levied on the pretext of national defence by a government which had ceased to defend, were poured into Constantinople and there disappeared. The palace, centre of all authority and life, became the asylum for strange and unrecognised "barbarians," Sclavonian favourites and blue-eyed Danes. Government was conducted altogether through the agency of the emperor's menials; and the triumphant successes of a noble captain in the West, George Magniac, were interrupted by the cabals of the palace.

Dramatic and romantic features.

§ 2. By far the larger part of this period (1028–1081) is occupied by feminine ascendancy. The record of the reigns of Romanus III., of Michael IV., of Constantine X., is briefly dismissed as "the husbands of Zoë"; and the single exception is her adopted son, Michael V. Theodora, now a septuagenarian, holds the sceptre alone in a prosperous reign which extinguishes the glories and the dynasty of the Phrygian family. And while the gravest issues trembled in the balance and hung on the question of the indispensable "Shogunate" in 1067, it was the fondness of Eudocia Macrembolitissa which suddenly raised Romanus IV. from the jeopardy of a criminal impeachment to full partnership of the throne. And indeed this half-century supplies, of all periods of Roman history, most abundant material for romance. The vicissitudes of fortune are so rapid; the crises which create or ruin

Dramatic and romantic features.

so startling and unexpected. While Constantinople can boast a populace, keenly interested in matters political, while the provinces in their baronial castles can show noble families to match the flower of Western chivalry, while wealth and learning and piety have each their meed of public honour and influence,—all classes look on with a kind of amused or detached interest, when the merest accident or caprice raises to the loftiest throne in the world, a respectable nobleman, a low-born eunuch's brother and nephew, an aged nominee of the chamberlains hurriedly summoned to the indignant Theodora's death-bed, the gallant but discredited general on whom the impressionable Eudocia cast eyes of favour. And while not once nor twice the Senate reappears, as taking a forward part in the imperial councils or the question of the succession, the people are singularly conspicuous in the epoch of undoubted decline. Their devotion to the person of their lady-sovereigns, their dogged and stubborn defence of divine right and legitimacy, their rough-and-ready principles of justice, their complete acceptance of the theory of the State as the appanage of a privileged family,—all this is new in Byzantine history and gives a modern and a romantic flavour to the stirring events which overthrew the ungrateful "Caulker" or set up (or again displaced) the sisters on an equal throne. Of dramatic incident there is no lack. We see the aged Constantine IX. deciding on his successor; and making a mistake and hastily recalling his judgment, both as to the husband intended for a daughter, and the daughter whose dowry was to be the lordship of the world. We have the strange story of Michael's infidelity, and the crafty intrigues of the powerful chamberlain, his brother; the bald, disappointed, and deluded emperor, the fatal Agamemnonian bath, and the sudden summons to the official world to come at midnight to see, without astonishment, the newly enthroned and wedded paramour.

Then follows the morbid and ascetic penitence of

Dramatic and romantic features.

Michael IV.; his strenuous task and military courage; his estrangement from his wife; and (perhaps most striking of all) the courageous walk of the empress through the public streets to visit her dying husband, only to encounter silence and bolted doors. Then the reluctant adoption of Cæsar Michael that the Paphlagonian reign under the adroit eunuch may last indefinitely; his deep ingratitude and the famous riot on behalf of "the beloved mothers" of the mob. And the next scene,—the swift galley reaching the anxious Constantine, perhaps with the message of death or darkness, only to summon him to a throne. Then his amazing reign; the court jester's plot to seize the purple and kill the emperor, who laughs heartily and takes no notice; the ludicrous spectacle of Constantine in the mutinous assault of Tornicius, sitting in perilous but imperturbable dignity at his balcony to watch the conflict below. And the pedantic pretensions of these sovereigns of a pantomime; the sigh of Constantine Ducas, preferring to be known rather for his literary gifts than for his rank; the misplaced activity of the student Michael VII., who under the teaching of Psellus seems to have unlearnt all the virtues of a traditional emperor, and fitted himself like Glycerius six centuries before for the quiet security of an episcopal chair. But through all these scenes of innocent and good-tempered tumult, the uncouth visages and unfamiliar tongues of the ministers of the palace,—raised to absolute power from the dust like Daniel or like Joseph in a single night. And the hard unflinching gaze of the Varangians who appear almost without warning on the scene, as they looked out upon a world which filled them with surprise and amusement. Such is a general impression of these times of brilliant unreality; sovereigns who are play-actors, ministers who are the viziers of "Hamlet" or a pantomime, a well-trained stage-mob who come in opportunely with loyal cries just in time to save innocence, injured if not conspicuously youthful. The serious

awakening comes in the crushing defeat and disgrace of Manzikert, the horrors of the siege and mercenary assault of the capital by the Comnenian henchmen. Truly in this short span the last trace of Roman institutions and legality, the last remnant of Roman duty and disinterested service, vanishes. And in its place we have only a mimicry of Western feudalism in the great families of Comnenus or Palæologus, who conceal their private aims under the majestic disguise of the extinct commonwealth.

Dramatic and romantic features.

§ 3. It must be confessed that the beginnings of the change may be traced in the later days of Basil II. himself; and this is by no means without parallel,—for the author of a great personal reconstruction sows broadcast the seeds of decay. In the Roman Empire the absence or the undue emphasis of this personal element was alike mischievous: the great ruler and overseer left no successor to his rigid devotion to duty, only to the outward splendour of a court; and the vacillating monarch who knew no mind but his minister's was unmasked without delay as a counterfeit. Basil is a striking figure,—solitary and austere. In the hard fight with the pretenders to win back his own heritage, in a vindictive and cruel war against a foreign foe, in the still harder efforts of self-mastery,—he had forgotten or unlearnt the kindlier and more amiable virtues. His later years were full of suspicious distrust; and he surrounded himself, to the great discontent of his subjects or historians, by a motley crowd of alien favourites. And the worst feature of his declining policy was sedulously copied by Constantine IX., who was careful not to attempt to recall any of Basil's virtues. Absorbed in pastimes, innocent and otherwise, he abandoned the control of affairs to his slaves; just as some luxurious Roman noble in olden time might surrender the cares of a vast estate to a trusted bailiff. It is especially noted of his brother, in those early years of the eleventh century, that he overthrew by his caprice the entire method and routine of the civil service,—that fragile

Well disciplined civilian bureaux ruined by caprice: all good features last.

Well-disciplined civilian bureaux ruined by caprice: all good features lost.

fabric which takes so long to erect and is upset in a few years. Promotion came neither from the East nor from the West; and good service in the gradual ascent of the hierarchy was no passport to favour or employment. It had been the primitive danger of the Roman commonwealth, strange amalgam of freedom and imperiousness, that the agents of the central power would gradually confront the subject-classes, foreign in sympathies and aspirations. The troubles and perils of the empire, the national appeal which was sometimes not entirely futile, had from time to time arrested this tendency. But in all periods it was latent, inherent indeed in the very system; the estrangement of the governing class from the interest of the mass and at times from the welfare of the whole. It must in fairness be remembered that the subjects could at no time have been trustworthy critics of the central policy. We may regret, but we must recognise, the isolated seclusion of the cities of the empire, strangers to their adjoining neighbours and bound by close ties of intercourse to the fountain-head. The ideal of a pacific State, protected from foreign assault by the untiring effort of rulers, amenable to the traditional discipline, passing on the torch of a well-defined policy of generous and "democratic" outline,—this lived or lingered even in the darkest hour of peril or corruption.

At this moment we are watching the gradual extinction of this Ideal. We may sympathise with those nationalist devotees, who decline to recognise value in a forcible protectorate of merit or capacity, exercised over the tumult and faction which is the essence of national life. There is indeed much to be said for the moderation, which in the terms of the older and perhaps exploded Liberalism refrains of set purpose from imposing good laws on others, unless they first invoke, appreciate, and endorse. Such a principle is favourable to that most priceless of human blessings, freedom. It is fatal to the very conception of empire,—regarded not indeed as in

China, as the moral hegemony of a caste and system, but in our Western sense, in India, in Egypt, perhaps in Ireland, the ruling of a people for their ultimate good against their will.

Well-disciplined civilian bureaux ruined by caprice: all good features lost.

It would ill become the complacent British citizen, secure in an acknowledged superiority, which gives him no personal trouble,—to dispute the grandeur of the Roman and Byzantine Ideal. Indeed, unless the writer is an avowed anti-imperialist at the outset, he must, from the English point of view, be a champion and apologist of the very conception of empire. In spite of the yawning divergence of aims and sympathy, in the general public and in civil and military circles, we must applaud the devoted efforts of the imperial line to keep the structure together at all costs; and must confess that the sacrifices they enjoined on the commonalty (as well as on themselves) were justified, at the not always unanimous bar of reason, of patriotism, and of advantage. Those, who for democratic China, or despotic Russia, or socialist Roman Empire of old, regard bureaucracy as an unmixed evil, will see in this class the unscrupulous oppressor of the poor, the desolators of empty provinces, the selfish agents of an unscrupulous tyrant. But amid all the facts of history and the complaints of historians, we may find much to praise in the system which gave equity and unity to a seething mass of rival races, and stability to the most beneficent government the world had yet seen. And it is in this epoch that the civil service, with its traditions and sense of corporate honour, is extinguished. This is the true Orientalism,—which in the eloquent pages of Champagny is the "King Charles' head" of that amiable historian of the early and later Cæsars.

§ 4. The true Orientalism, in which the institutions of Rome perished, was neither the worship of Mithra and the sun, nor the so-called absolutism of Diocletian, nor the expensive splendour of the court of Constantine, nor the rigorous etiquette which concealed

Small personal influence of Basil's successors: puppets of favourite or minister.

majesty from the meaner world, nor even the caste-system which apportioned society into fixed strata without communication or genuine sympathy,—the mischievous Orientalism of which Champagny dreamt, came only in the eleventh century. In place of a hereditary nobility, or a *noblesse* of merit or of "the robe," pure accident and caprice bore sway. And in the Byzantine court with a sort of cynical irony;—for no sense of direct theocratic inspiration, no dogma of fatalism, precluded the constant criticism of the capital. The bygone civil service might indeed have been an arrogant caste,—the army might on rare occasion prove rather a menace than a defence to the subjects,—but neither was entirely foreign. Something of a vague national spirit had revived in the seventh century; and the Iconoclasts had combated manfully a world-renouncing superstition that populated the monkeries, impoverished the soil and the breed, and taught that the duties of a soldier defending his country involved grievous sin. With pardonable and exaggerated emphasis, all the ministers of Constantine IX. are barbarians, to the disgusted writers; just as later all the tumultuary levies of Alexius will be mercenaries. We are indeed nearly approaching that dangerous period in the life of a modern State, when to use the expression of Tacitus, "*Nulla publica arma*"; when the defenceless palace, head and centre of the whole, is at the mercy of the first adventurer.

Nicephorus II. (963) rises to power through the train-bands of a base-born son of a former emperor; and he has learnt a useful lesson; for he fortifies the palace hitherto singularly open and accessible;—and we may doubt which is the more significant of the time,—the suspicious yet needful action of the monarch or the undoubted resentment which his well-founded diffidence aroused in his subjects. The centralised and effective control of a personal ruler fell to pieces, or masqueraded as the most laughable pretence, as soon as the strong will disappeared that summoned it into precarious being. It is clear that Basil's suc-

cessors proved one and all the most remarkable automata in the whole line of princes. Power was vested no longer in a regent or joint-emperor, but in a chamberlain. John, the official "nurturer of orphans" or President of the Foundling Hospital, exercises for nearly twelve years the only real authority. The presumptuous interference of the titular sovereign is resented, whether it be the serious and conscientious reforms suggested by his brother the fourth Michael, or the mere ungrateful arbitrariness of his nephew, the fifth. John is able to keep the emperor in complete ignorance of the course of events; and in the well-known humanity of the time it is difficult to apportion responsibility for the summary and merciless justice, which appears now and again even in this insincere and indulgent age. The direct initiative of the Augustus was suspended during the interregnum of Irene's rule, when the empress, "plaything of her favourites," watched with interest but without influence the deadly rivalry of Staurace and Aëtius. It cannot be denied that the administration of John was oppressive; that it submerged the smaller owners, whom it is the chief interest of a State to maintain and to safeguard. Romanus III. had acquired a popularity second only perhaps to that of Anastasius, at the close of the fifth century: he had abolished the corporate responsibility (*ἀλληλέγγυον*), as his aged predecessor had by craft and command not merely ended the imposition of the *χρυσάργυρον*, but prevented any chance of its revival. But like Nicephorus I., Romanus III. was driven by ill-success and pressing needs to become a typical tax-gatherer, no doubt under the admonition of John; and it is perhaps difficult to say which portion, the Balkan and European or the Asiatic, suffered more from his exaction. The ascendancy of John was terminated by Michael V. (1041), and the Empress Theodora was suspected of tardy and unofficial vengeance when the fallen minister was blinded under Constantine X. This monarch, whose reign in the brisk and scandalous chronicle

Small personal influence of Basil's successors: puppets of favourite or minister.

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of Psellus reads like a story of some comedy-king, was noted for the evil character and slender credentials of the minister to whom he entrusted affairs. The elevation of a certain Boïlas to the rank of senator seems to have excited particular comment; while in the appointment of a capable eunuch of his household to command an expedition against Sicily he might plead either his undoubted success against the rival Magniac, or the historic precedent of Justinian in the sixth, of Irene at the close of the ninth, century. But the crowning error of the selfish or maladroit statesmen of the palace of Constantine, was the disarming of the Bagratids and the exposure of the Eastern frontier. The ninth of the name, like our James I., could not bear the sight of a naked weapon, discountenanced the pageants of military reviews, and had a rooted dislike of anything which might suggest an invidious comparison with his warlike brother. Both Romanus III. and Michael IV. had appeared at the head of their troops, according to the precedent of most Byzantine sovereigns; but with the ease-loving Constantine X. the military skill or prowess of the emperor was in complete abeyance. A determined policy was now initiated of starving the army and undermining, not merely the influence of the warrior-magnates of the suspected Asiatic families, but the indispensable defences of the empire itself.

Protest of military element under Comnenus: counter-movement under Constantine XI.: reaction under Eudocia and Romanus IV.: silent passing of the 'Roman' Empire.

§ 5. After the short but glorious reign of Theodora upon whom fell the entire renown of the great house, the discontent and justified resentment of the military caste flared into open rebellion. Michael VI. ingratiates himself with Senate and rabble, while disparaging the brave defenders of the empire, who lived aloof from the pettiness and intrigue of a court. We have a full account of this very interesting and significant reaction; we can trace the meetings of the conspirators in the now ruinous fastnesses of the Lesser Asia, the popularity of a noble scion of a house soon to be famous or rather notorious and the

elevation of Isaac I. We hear of the ironical promise of a stern patriarch to the feeble Michael, and the retirement of the aged civilian with the bellicose title, in face of a storm of military prejudice such as before now swept Severus II. (235) or Mauricius (602) from the throne. In this unhappy and disastrous duel of the two great departments of State, in this final war to the knife between the spheres of military and administrative influence, the earliest representatives of the mailed hand and of the frank and straightforward policy of "no surrender," are strangely unsuccessful. The reasons which led to the abdication of the first Comnenus are shrouded in obscurity; like Claudius II. (268–270) he appears for a brief two years to point the way for the dynastic success of his house. We may judge from the inconclusive surmises of the historians that the dead and inert mass of silent bureaucratic or palace prejudice was exerted to make abortive all the schemes of reform. He became "hated by all," as we are told mysteriously; and we are left to suppose that the dislike was partly due to his openness in ascribing his power to the sword. His coinage represented an armed and mounted figure; and this rude unveiling of the hidden source or basis of sovereignty was distasteful to an age which prided itself on its *civilitas*.—The elevation of Constantine XI. Ducas is a conscious protest and a deliberate reaction against the brief military interlude. The severe penalties and confiscations which Isaac I. had sanctioned were all revoked; and it was sufficient title to dignity and esteem in this reign to have suffered disgrace or mulct during the last.

Protest of military element under Comnenus: counter-movement under Constantine XI.: reaction under Eudocia and Romanus IV.: silent passing of the 'Roman' Empire.

Everything was directed towards the replenishment of the treasury, not for the war-chest but for the enrichment of officials and the payment of pensions. The civil service, or what was still left, might thus insure themselves against the accident or caprice which had replaced by purely precarious tenure the old security of deserved promotion. The ladder no longer rested steadily on earth to lose itself in the

Protest of military element under Comnenus: counter-movement under Constantine XI.: reaction under Eudocia and Romanus IV.: silent passing of the 'Roman' Empire.

splendour of the imperial presence, to the neighbourhood of which the lowliest aspirant might rise in a fixed series of gradations. Already had begun the pillage of the public funds for private purposes,—feudal patrimonialism without its chivalry or family pride. The military interest was exposed to cool and systematic neglect; and the death of this vain pedant left the empire once more in the hands of an empress-regent and several Augusti in minority,—once more exposed to a serious foreign inroad, this time the most dangerous and permanent of them all. The choice of Eudocia, like Theophano a century before bestowing hand and partnership on a regent-emperor, fell upon a great Cappadocian nobleman, as we have seen; and her predilection, though it was perjured, broke the decrepit and corrupt fetters of civilian rule, and perhaps gave a momentary check to Seljukian advance; just as the ambiguous issue of Chalons (451) stopped the irresistible current of Attila. The revival came too late; the exchequer was empty; the army discouraged and demoralised; the commissariat dislocated; the practice and ideal of the soldiers, as in the Chinese Empire, might perhaps carry a certain stigma.

Now after the defeat of Manzikert, an unexpected arbiter rouses itself from its long slumber of subservience; it is the Senate that takes charge of affairs, and wreaks vengeance on the hated and now beaten representative of the military faction. In the reign of Constantine's sons Michael VII. and Constantine XII., the civil faction enjoys a brief ascendancy, and a last respite. But forces strange hitherto to the development of the imperial system, are gathering around; unfamiliar Western vocables, betraying their alien origin by their awkward gait in Hellenic dress. The walls of partition so long and so carefully maintained between Western enterprise and Eastern fanaticism, are now breaking down; the last foot of ground in Magna Græcia ceases to own a "Roman" sway; everywhere is there confusion and dismay, though

the matchless central position of the capital gives it a lulling sense of present security. We are no longer seriously considering Roman institutions; but the scuffle of ambitious pretenders, for the still ample relics of a system, not moribund but dead. Three military pretenders as in the days of artistic Nero, start up to oust the feeble Michael VII.: with the brief success of the third and fourth Nicephorus, who assumed the imperial title, we are not further concerned. The Roman Empire, whose features however disguised and remodelled by successive reformers, have throughout been recognisable, has passed away. Alexius I. Comnenus opens both a new dynasty and a new age.

Protest of military element under Comnenus: counter-movement under Constantine XI.: reaction under Eudocia and Romanus IV.: silent passing of the 'Roman' Empire.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD

Empire not work of individuals: emperor representative.

§ 1. It is now possible to cast our eyes back over the span of human history which we have endeavoured to traverse; and to gather some general principles from a rapid survey. What light does the entire system throw upon political theory or social development? It must be left in doubt whether the aim of such speculation is that of the student or the humanitarian; do we inquire to increase merely our theoretical knowledge, or to equip ourselves for the improvement of our present lot? I have suggested here and elsewhere the very obvious limits to the rational and calculating interference of man. Political institutions are very clearly a growth of nature, not a building of a conscious architect; and even in our modest survey we have intimated that the great innovators have gathered up the past more than invented. So we have drawn special attention to the caution needed in estimating the past; we must not be led astray by the voluble eloquence and conceit of those agents who believe that they lead when they do but follow; who fancy they are laying the foundation-stone of a great achievement, when they are only drawing the curtain and exposing a long-finished work. The historian comes to distrust instinctively the momentous dates and crises of past ages. He is always burrowing back to ascertain in what obscure and subterranean manner such and such changes were brought about; and, disregarding the edict of a king or the jubilation of a people, he has eyes only for the dim glimpses of silent forces, which then received public recognition though their task had been perhaps long accomplished. Now in an Introduction, I endeavoured to convey the peculiar

interest of the imperial epoch from this point of view. It is not a record of personal ambition or of arbitrary caprice. If I can venture to convey any lesson or moral, it would be the fact of the *representative* character of sovereignty, the truthfulness and faithful performance of the series of honest rulers, in their great popular mandate. The modern State, as we must see, issues from an alien and invading royalty, rules by right of conquest and possession, and only later takes to itself and wears somewhat awkwardly the parental and representative habiliments. And it is reinforced by the suspicion and timidity of our national separatism; which since the break-up of ecclesiastical or imperial Christendom, divides men according to territory into hostile camps, and crushes civilisation with the military burden. In every sense, the empire of Augustus had a more generous origin and a more liberal policy. It was *pacific* in aim and not indefinitely expansive or aggressive. And it was *impersonal* and idealist,—the idea embodying itself forth in chosen instruments for its task; not the work of any one man's inventive originality, like the system of Peter or Napoleon, but the issue of the "common sense" of the age. And to this its long duration and still abiding romance bear incontestable witness. He who from time to time, at the cost of peril and often thankless labour, personified the idea was truly *representative;* and tended by no vanity or ambition but by the stress of an outward appeal to *absolutism*. It seems probable that in these four words, which apply either to the system or to its exponent, lies the secret of its permanence and its development, of its problems and its dangers. But before I can proceed to illustrate my meaning clearly, I must preface this study with a few words on the theory of the State.

Empire not work of individuals: emperor representative.

§ 2. Frequent objection has been taken to the time wasted in purely academic discussion on the "seat of sovereignty." For to penetrate beneath the surface of a purely logical and symmetrical structure to

Exception to general rule forbidding 'absolute' government: real personal control.

real life, is to discover that there is no such thing. Government is the resultant of many forces, and the most conspicuous are not the most potent. Indeed, on a retrospect of the annals of mankind the only admissible generalisation might appear to be this: that the "Will of the People" will always find expression and satisfaction. But this must not be taken in the vague superficial meaning which we attach to such a phrase to-day; rather in the sense that behind the nominal ruler stands the great solid force of conservatism, typical of genuine democracy, the moral approval, dull but effective, the "general sense" of the community; which itself silent and indefinite issues somehow in the agency which from time to time controls the State. This Will is not the academic programme of partisans, but it is something more primitive, fundamental, and unanimous.

It seats Julius or Napoleon on the throne, and scans with suspicion the pretension of modern "representation" to express its inner meaning. Unhappily democracy must find vent in a personal Cæsarism, or lose all its force and significance in the tumult of rival and passionate voices. In times past, the great idea of the general welfare has not been left entirely "without witness," as modern reformers arrogantly imagine; and it has worked through the willing or unconscious agency of many instruments. But it has never been so potent as when it worked in stealth and secrecy, or so contented as when it found an able spokesman in an ambitious statesman, whom it carries past a mere selfish aim and ennobles by entrusting with the common safety. By a significant verification of Hegelian formula, authority in the moment of its technical recognition "passes into its other" and is disarmed. No careful student of national development will deny that effective control over national destinies is exercised elsewhere than in the titular seat of power. In the superficial and misleading distinctions of governments, by *one*, by *many*, or by *few*, we over-

look these plain facts, that the ruler is the spokesman of the whole, unable for all his vanity to rid himself of his serious and representative character; and that the more numerous the titular owners of political power, the more facile the reign of a resolute minority. I have stated without misgiving the view that actual despotism and genuine popular government is only possible "in the very simplest surroundings," in the most primitive and archaic conditions. Before us, when we have settled our formula, lies the genuine task of discovering where influence lies, and what secret interests control the actions of a government, whose duty is limited to an endorsement of the fact accomplished.

Exception to general rule forbidding 'absolute' government: real personal control.

To the student the Roman Empire forms an apparent exception to this rudimentary truth; I have frequent occasion to note there the vigilant personal monarchy, which existed longer than in any other country and continually revived in obedience to the ideal, after delegation and surrender had taken place. It would be no paradox to assert that the personal active tone of the imperial function was due in large measure to its impersonal character. It may be roundly stated that every government must fall under one of two types; the one is the *family*, natural and moral, the other is the *State*, artificial and forcible. An opportunity is happily provided for the ruler of this latter form to assume the benevolent attitude of the patriarch; and the reverent affection felt for a monarch is a precious asset in the present state of society. But in origin the two are widely apart: in most European countries, kingship is foreign and introduced by the conquest of a military caste: only in course of time has the king acquired the guise of an impartial representative. So early as the primitive institution of the Germans, the *rex* and the *dux* were clearly distinguished,—the tribal father by birth designated as the arbiter among kinsmen, the chieftain chosen for merit and forming by free choice an artificial society around him. To this division

Exception to general rule forbidding 'absolute' government: real personal control.

corresponds the further distinctions of civil and military, moral suasion and forcible coercion,—and (of greatest interest for our present design) stability and efficiency. These artificial extra-tribal groupings need very different and special qualities in a ruler: and in the exigence of battle and stratagem, merit and ability supplant old privilege or birthright. War (due to no "original sin" but to economic displacement or rapid filling of territory) is a different science from the calm settlement of kinsfolk's disputes, according to tribal custom. The modern State, it must be confessed, starts with very few *moral* prepossessions, beyond the sense of honour and chivalrous faithfulness to a leader. But in its very nature it is beyond and aloof from any local or partial creed or usage, and has to carve out its own principality and its own code. The Christian (or perhaps Roman) Church reinforced the instinctive virtues of the Teutons, and guided the young nations as they exulted in the possession of the Promised Land. Upon the divorce of things secular and sacred, openly proclaimed in the early years of the sixteenth century, it was seen how alarmingly scanty was the moral equipment of the utilitarian State, of conquest reinforced and unified by a new spirit of suspicious nationality. Pure utility and pure force stood forth naked and unabashed as the end, and the means to the end. Nor has the much vaunted "transference of power to the masses" effected any change. Religion and a secular humanitarianism, which is its direct but ungrateful offspring, have till recent days thrown a decent veil over the forcible and non-moral basis of modern society. But Science has rudely dispelled the older illusions; and amid our tenderness for the worthless and our pacific if Platonic affection for other nations and races, continually reminds us of the single duty of the organism, social or human, to survive at all costs.

§ 3. The counteracting and instinctive forces, religious feeling or humane sympathy, are no doubt

strong enough to last our time; and to have no theoretic or reasoned basis for State or for individual conduct, does not imply the reign of untempered caprice or pure savagery. But it is well in an age which talks loudly of morality and despises the dark ages of superstition, to recognise that modern society rests on force and self-interest, whatever disguise sentiment and instinct may hang around it. All moral notions spring from the relations of family life and their gradual extension to others in a wider but still concentric circle. But the modern State, however civilian and "pacifist" in appearance, is a direct descendant of a military conqueror; and knows none of the softer emotions, the uncompelled homage, the thoughtful and affectionate care of the family. A republican State is only a headless and disorganised militarism, in which the vacant autocracy of the commander-in-chief is exploited by different intriguers. Only in monarchies, where the "ducal" lineaments are lost or merged in the "regal" (that is, paternal) is there any reserve-force of sentiment and respect, to appease the bitter class-warfare, heritage and *raison d'être* of the free commonwealth. The State, accustomed to the tradition of the drill-ground and the barrack, is inherently hostile to the family, as well as to its later imitation, feudalism. It is clear to-day, whatever the professions of an almost extinct Liberalism, that the State regards citizens as isolated units; they may be members of a regiment, a guild, a caste, a trades-union, but they crouch before the towering altitude of the State as individuals. "As when the physical body suffers dissolution [so Hegel writes], each point gains a life of its own, but it is only the miserable life of worms; so the political organism is here dissolved into Atoms, that is, private persons." All favourite modern theories contemplate the substitution of a central control for these lesser associations; or, by their efficacy, a direct authority over the separate units. We accuse the Roman system of centralism and over-taxation, and

Empire not founded like modern State on force: State hostile to family and to freedom.

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we idly blame the costly ambition of an imperial line. We regret that the people had not entered into their rights and protested effectively against the loss of local freedom and the pressure of intolerable burdens. Yet this is precisely the tendency of the most popular States to-day; and we have to seek elsewhere than in princely pride or tyranny for its origin. The modern State, it would seem, can no more avoid the current which sets toward expensive machinery than the empire. Man's protests, remedies, reforms, devices, were unavailing. All suffered, but it was nobody's fault; merely the native weakness and complexity which comes in the train of an advanced civilisation. We shall find it impossible to question the "liberal imperialism" of Rome, its gradual immersion in more engrossing duties, without bringing a fierce and indeed final indictment against the modern State, and any prevalent reconstruction on Utopian lines. It is best therefore to withhold our censure, and merely assign our approval to the rulers who strove in vain against the current; who endeavoured to lighten the ruinous burden of citizenship and, in a very excess of conscientious zeal, lent themselves in an unwise expenditure of self, to the support of centralisation and the discouragement of local and personal initiative. Yet it is difficult to see that Socialism has any other aim to-day than to bring about such a condition of society, as the Roman world judged and condemned by its fruits hundreds of years ago.

Empire pacific and parental: forced into centralism: the 'Protectionist' State.

§ 4. The imperial Ideal had a nobler side, by which it stands contrasted with the modern State, in spite of its thin veneer of Christianity. It was a revival of the *pacific* and *parental* conception of sovereignty. The Senate might represent the narrow and exclusive circle or family conclave, resenting the loss of privilege and the opening of the civic gates to various classes of newcomers. But the father might extend the rights of children by the fiction of adoption; and the generous treatment of

the provinces, even at the expense of the metropolis and Italy, is a commonplace of history. It will be readily conceded that there was strictly no *representative* element in the Senate; and that there was good reason to suspect the vague debates of elected bodies as an instrument of government. This paternal and benevolent character of Cæsar is reflected in the worship of the emperor, in which reverence for the Ideal and respect for the person were skilfully blended. And we have now to face the problem, why this august figure was seduced into the sordid intricacies of administrative routine, and sacrificed the dignity of an impartial Court of Final Appeal to mingle through his agents in the daily turmoil? The conception of *parental* sovereignty, on which perhaps the fate of Europe may depend in the future, is not that of meddlesome interference or hourly vigilance. The aim of all lovers of freedom must be, not to curtail the supposed prerogative of princes, but to ensure and safeguard the liberty of the meanest subject. If this is to be more than a mere pretence, the area of civic influence must be restricted; the interest and control a genuine reality. An idle passion for symmetry and uniformity must be abandoned; and local developments, mistakes and corrections alike, must be awaited and borne with patience. It was no fault of Cæsar, but rather his merit and the public confidence that summoned him into this unwelcome and fatiguing task. Like some unwise headmasters, he plunges into boyish quarrels and makes an ultimate arbitrament cheap and familiar. Modern royalty has avoided this danger: it lies in a not inaccessible reserve, and is never frittered by constant intervention, or degraded by every petty abuse of the official, who claims to act in its immediate name.

Empire pacific and parental: forced into centralism: the 'Protectionist' State.

We come at last then, to the real interest of this period; the attempt to combine *efficiency* and *stability*. We can conceive the acme of stability in

Empire pacific and parental: forced into centralism: the 'Protectionist' State.

patriarchal government, because it would occur to no one to question a father's command or rather expressed wish; and it would be an inconceivable impiety to suggest a substitute. But the "ducal" or efficient ruler is respected and obeyed in default of other title, only so long as he capably fills the post to which he was chosen. In origin, the emperor was a magistrate, elected for a definite term to perform precise duties; his omnipotence was derivative and might be circumscribed by the same power that created or surrendered it. Outside Rome and the *pomœrium*, the emperor was "king" to the Greeks, with all the early classical connotation of the majestic title, untarnished even through the scuffles and scandals of the Diadochi. We have before us several anxious problems awaiting settlement. The empire was singularly reticent about its secrets; it loved not to explore the names or source of office or the compromise they imperfectly concealed; it never suffered the precise outline and formula to come to daylight and be rudely handled by lawyers; it was content with dimness of origin and certainty of power. Yet the attempt to maintain this abstract indefiniteness cost many noble lives, and brought much disorder and civil warfare into a system, which aimed solely at the welfare, peace, and order of a diffused and populous realm.

Conflict of independent agencies thereby created (Church, Army, Civil Service), in end ruinous.

§ 5. There existed too in the womb of the imperial Ideal two hostile powers, representing the *civilian* and the *soldier*, destined to issue forth in fraternal rivalry as Jacob and Esau. Again round these two words might be built a long and embracing argument, which should comprise the fortunes of the whole imperial line. But let us first examine the anomaly or the collision and conflict of interest, in the expected ubiquity and personal efficacy of Cæsar. The problem has been often noted in the text,—how to make the chief magistrate safe and dignified, yet responsible and effective? At one time the former thought seems the idea, at another time, direct and personal work

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is exacted at all hazards. In its deference to both interests, order and security, vigilance and vigour, the system took the ominous turning that leads to centralisation and absolutism, as we have already seen. The period we survey shows clearly the irresistible force of the current; Diocletian, Justinian, Leo, Basil, cannot help themselves. When personal initiative is dangerous, new safeguards are invented and the different orders of the State are made more directly accountable to a central control,—which, as these unifiers fondly imagined, would be always synonymous with the sovereign himself. As we recognised, they were profoundly mistaken. Each solemn proclamation of unlimited power loosened the grip of the isolated ruler on the helm. Our history is full of attempts on the part of the ruler to relieve himself of irksome responsibility; and on the part of the "general sense" or some conscientious reaction, to fit once more the burden on his shoulders. In our second period we have a succession of expedients for acquiring, like other nations, a king who does not govern:—the Vizierate of the great prefects under Commodus and Severus; the influence of the Jurists; the proposed "division of labour"; the influence of queen-mothers and empress-dowagers; the suggested Lamaism of Elagabalus; the recall of the Senate to partnership in affairs; the palatines and chamberlains; and finally in the West the barbarian patronate, and at a later period, the systematic "Shogunate" in the East, side by side (in either case) of a dignified but idle legitimacy. But from this Oriental leisure or penumbra, the Ideal was again and again dragged forth into the glorious sunlight; and personal rule was resumed with all its perils and crises.

If the prince unite in his sole person civil and military power, to which element shall the primacy be given? We can trace the feud of the soldier-caste and the civilian hierarchy throughout the whole period; and its annals might be rewritten, without serious omission, from this single standpoint. For the more

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integral and colourless with excess of quality and virtue the central omnipotence, the greater will be the need below for distinct specialism of function and careful training. And each of these well-tutored corporations, servants or agents of the sovereign, assumes in time all the airs and graces of complete independence; while in the fourth century a fresh element of complication emerges in an unexpected quarter,—the Christian Church. Later Roman history records the attempt of the Centre to maintain its supremacy against these three powers; once subordinate but now each clamorous for mastery. If power was in theory unified, life was subdivided and specialised; and three corporations yielded a reluctant and often unreal homage to the emperor. In the West the very idea of the commonwealth disappears in the expulsion or rather disappearance of imperial authority, to give place to Church and feudal army. In the East, the titular autocracy is maintained, but it leans successively on one or other of these powerful but untrustworthy supports. Our period terminates in a very significant phase of the duel; it is no longer a conflict between the civilian and the staff-corps, the corrupt or abrupt methods of exchequer or court-martial, —but between the alien menials of an Oriental despot and a feudal nobility who borrowed some of the chivalry of the Teuton. But in such an atmosphere and in such a form of the dilemma, no place could be found for the Roman spirit or for Roman institutions; and we rightly place in that epoch the extreme limit of our work.—Here then ended the greatest and least explicit political ideal that has swayed mankind, and has for the longest period performed unfalteringly its promised task. The Ideal hovered perpetually between the policy of hard work and inaccessible majesty. Conscientious reactions from titled idleness were frequent and praiseworthy; and it perished only when its own children of the bureau or the camp abandoned

in self-seeking the true classical spirit of duty, and the conception of office as a trust.

So far domestic: main foreign problem, barbarians: regret for extinction of Western line.

§ 6. But I cannot conclude without a mention of the great external problems which amid these domestic disputes pressed "Liberal imperialism" for an immediate answer.—If the empire is liberal, pacific, representative, what attitude will it take up in regard to fresh applicants for admission? Our epoch starts with the first distant rumblings of the Teutonic movement, the unwelcome certainty to the far-sighted of a coming tempest from the north, in the last years of the first century. And after Aurelius a hundred years later, we have the barbarians always with us; and two urgent duties are added to the peaceful functions of Cæsar in the interior,—the defence of the frontier against the most violent, the settlement in Roman soil and employment in Roman armies of the most trustworthy, of these newcomers. I have ventured to express openly my regrets at the vacillating policy of Valens and Honorius,—or rather of their advisers. There was no reason to refuse a title of honour to Alaric; for such influence as he exerted is best disarmed and made harmless, according to our usual formula, by a complete recognition. Teutonic kingdoms and settlements under imperial suzerainty would have no doubt acquired a greater measure of autonomy than we can find in the earlier provincial system. Western Europe would have approached more nearly to the ideal of mediæval Germany; and it is yet to be seen whether the decentralised particularism of the modern empire is not after all the healthiest type of national life. Ataulphus would have reigned as a loyal vassal; Alaric have defended as a brave champion; and the wistful glances directed by chroniclers and monarchs to Byzantium in the Dark Ages would have been arrested and satisfied in the nearer splendours of Ravenna or Rome. The whole era of the Patriciate bears witness to the genuine feeling of the barbarian for the majesty of the purple. Their offer was something different from the policy which settles, by the

So far domestic: main foreign problem, barbarians: regret for extinction of Western line.

side of an Oriental or Turkish misruler, an agent or resident or high commissioner, and flatters national vanity by the maintenance of a titular nominee who is denied any effective power. The same century which listened to the firm yet respectful demands of Alaric witnessed the accession of an Isaurian brigand, —a member of that race not unlike the Miaotze in the south of China, which in their mountainous fastnesses had defied Roman armies and pillaged Roman provinces, not a century before. It is clear that Roman history has thus two springs of movement: the internal development toward bureaucracy, centralism, and caste-distinction, inseparable from any advanced civilisation; and the exterior pressure of the new races. In the crystallising strata of a stationary commonwealth, there were needed a professional army, an expert civilian caste, a dutiful class of peasant cultivators, an order of regular contributors to the increasing cost of administration. In the German influx there was present just that spirit or vivacious element which would have formed an invaluable counterpoise to fixity and sloth, a stimulus to a petrifying society. The objective classic ideal, with its exaggerated respect for law and order, was confronted and balanced by a welcome subjectivity. Nor would the majesty of the empire have suffered hurt, if the Teutonic chivalry towards an overlord had reinforced the formal and chilly deference to the impersonal system. The venturesome and petulant sallies of half-autonomous chieftains would have broken the mournful and conscientious monotony of Roman institutions. "British rule," writes Dr. Fitchett, "it cannot be denied, has bleached into commonplace the picturesque side of Indian life. It has eliminated the old element of adventure which made it dear to the lawless classes." Personal virtues, honour, and loyalty, and a brisk personal initiative, would have replaced or tempered the classical deference to authority and the surrender of the trouble or expense of self-rule to an absolute power, overwhelmed

with its responsibility. Fresh air would have burst into the chamber where adroit machinery had realised the Socialistic ideal,—that is, reduced every man to a type, every instance to a law, and guarded in a practical casuistry against every emergency. And in time even the indolent populace of the capitals would have been supplanted, or shamed into exertion. In any case, the pendulum would swing once more in the wholesome direction of the estate, the villa, and the manor; and a wider, more equal distribution of refinement, letters, and comfort would be reached.

So far domestic: main foreign problem, barbarians: regret for extinction of Western line.

The Meroving monarchy was an abortive and untimely simulacrum of later Roman imperialism; the chieftain of the shattered vase becomes the secluded potentate, who rules subjects from a palace without jury or appeal. It was a poor imitation of such methods as we usually dismiss into limbo as "Byzantine"; but the mayoralty or Shogunate which arose on its incompetence is never found in its strict form in the Eastern realm. A Western emperor might be a dignified recluse and distant suzerain; but such affectation was ridiculous in an ignorant Frankish chieftain, whose sole function and justification lay in an active and bellicose life. The elevation of Charles was no priestly intrigue or ambitious sally, but the resumption by the West of a dignity which it should never have surrendered, which it never ceased to regret.

Some writers will waste time on an idle discussion of the *legitimacy* of this momentous step. But the canon of legality is one which we can apply to every Roman institution except the chief of all. The source of law is itself above law; and comes into being through accident or destiny. A legal title was won solely by tried efficiency; not by any formal consecration, popular applause, or hurried endorsement of success by an anxious Senate. But in any case Charles stands on the same level as Heraclius: both are summoned to protect or to deliver the capital; both build up painfully the new fabric of central

So far domestic: main foreign problem, barbarians: regret for extinction of Western line.

control. Legitimate or not, self-crowned autocrat or papal vassal,—it matters little; the important point is the witness of Christmas Day 800 to the undying reverence of the Germanic races for the imperial Ideal, to their long regret for the noiseless passing of the Western Cæsar. And although history pursues its solemn course without conscious human intervention, and the historian idly surmises what might have been, as he seeks to unravel the web of impersonal motive forces,—it is difficult to suppress a wish that this Western line had not expired in Romulus, first and last of the royal and imperial series of Rome.

Criticism of Hegel unfair: emperor representative and laudable (although Cæsarism, like Socialism, denies maturity and freedom, and is at once cause and symptom of decay).

§ 7. I am reminded at this point of a significant denial of the *representative* character of the emperor, of the "liberal imperialism," which, as I have ventured to submit, not only did give expression to the mute appeal and half-formed aspirations of the time, but could welcome and include without loss of dignity or principle the wanderers who asked for shelter. Hegel seems in his criticism of the imperial system to have reversed his usual position and forgotten his favourite axioms: "In the person of the emperor isolated subjectivity has gained a completely unlimited realisation . . . individual subjectivity thus entirely emancipated from control has no inward life, no prospective nor retrospective emotions, no repentance, hope, fear—not even thought. The springs of action are none other than desire, lust, passion, fancy—in short, caprice absolutely unfettered." The reverence of the philosophical historian for Hegel must be great; for he is no vague and misty declaimer, and behind his general statements lies a solid background of careful study and inductive detail. But it is strange that he detects no difference between a savage Oriental monarchy and the Roman constitution. Caprice and subjectivity, —this is precisely what the historian does not find, except in the mere garrulous and scandal-loving storybooks, in the palace rumours of a Nero or a Commodus. Closer inspection reveals the discipline and

traditional method and policy, the beneficent design, the deference to increasing precedent,—which mark even the most "subjective" of these princes. Hegel is blind to this perhaps unwilling, but not the less real conscientious, and representative character; or rather he recognises it in a passing sentence and does not stop to reconcile his antinomy. For he says: "Under that coarsest and most loathsome tyrant Domitian . . . the Roman world, the historian tells us, enjoyed tranquillising repose." It is clear then that the merits of the system, and the public cares and activity of Cæsar, were independent of his capricious moments and private vices. It is an accident that has preserved these malicious chronicles; the natural reticence of contentment has left few monuments of the general prosperity. Again, he asserts that "the concrete element in the character of the emperor is therefore of itself of no interest, because the concrete is not of intrinsic importance." The emperors "of noble character" he dismisses with indifference as a "happy chance" which "produced no change in the State,—and passed away without a trace." A system which, with a strict personal government, produces "tranquillising repose" under the "worst" sovereign, and is so stable that not even good rulers produce a change,—may well deserve a closer and more sympathetic study than is given in these sweeping statements. We are quite ready to admit that the *concrete* (which must here imply the idiosyncratic and peculiar) is not the essential. But the conclusion, which meets us more than half-way, indeed leaps out of the evidence, is surely this: whatever his character and training, sympathies or equipment, the prince of the hour was irresistibly clothed with a representative function and was entrusted by the Time-Spirit with the general welfare,—a duty which no other person, class, or corporation could fulfil.—It is time then to close a retrospect already approaching undue length.

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We have attempted to do justice to the conscientious

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executive which is the pride of the imperial line: we have made no apology for the sloth of the peoples that place this perilous burden on a single man, nor have we entirely approved the set and precise hierarchy of too powerful agents, which grew up in response to this widespread invocation of absolutism. We do not conceive that Cæsarism (as understood in modern times) is the last word in political wisdom, though it may well be the ultimate appeal of a disappointed democracy or an impatient Socialism. For only an absolute ruler like Alexander can cut the Gordian knot, which social and ultra-political influences bind tightly round the modern State, prohibiting reform apart from revolution. If we criticise the Roman world for yielding to Cæsar, we aim an indictment against the supineness of our own people: a higher class tempted to retire from the ungrateful task of public life, and a lower entirely content to look on at the artificial duels of party, or submit (as the alternative) to comfortable but autocratic regimentation from above. The Roman Empire tried to satisfy democracy in its lowest and most obvious requirements; it was a crowned Socialism.

If it is at all permissible to trace decisive lessons in the happenings and tendencies of the past, we can only read a caution against the surrender of individual and family rights, against the extinction of that needful ephoralty in a centralised State, an independent landed class; and a solemn warning against the pauperising policy of mistaken humanitarians. But for the great line of rulers, whose success or failure we here dismiss, we can have nothing but praise and astonishment. They overtaxed their strength in relieving idleness and incompetence of its natural fate and burden; they aimed their suspicions against an "aristocracy," which in any State is an indispensable counterpoise to a centralised government; they reposed an excessive trust in those agents and emissaries of a benevolent policy, who, once sent forth to their work, defied effective control; and they vacillated between favour

and neglect of the two great branches of the State, the civilian and the military class. But so far as duty implies the following of one's own lights and private conscience (even if they be but a will-o'-the-wisp), the unselfish adherence to corporate tradition and fidelity to an ancient heritage,—they deserve our closest study and our impartial praise. They gave a new meaning and solemnity, honourable but burdensome, to the sovereign dignity: and we close our records at the point, when this acceptance of a trust has developed into the easy and irresponsible enjoyment of a private estate.

Criticism of Hegel unfair: emperor representative and laudable (although Cæsarism, like Socialism, denies maturity and freedom, and is at once cause and symptom of decay).

ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. All periods in human history arbitrary: all development continuous: pure historical narrative not contemplated: debt to the English forerunners: Oxford historians: value of "classical" studies: uncertainty of all political theory to-day and recurrence of old evils and problems believed obsolete: points of resemblance in the imperial system and current theories of the State: close analogies in the state of society or the conception of government: value of the analysis of cyclic development.

§ 2. But is not this didactic or pragmatic use of history misleading?: history either statistical or economic: the discovery of the chain of events, of the causes which produced, the tendencies which underlie: denial of man's free-agency, tool of impersonal forces: absence of moral censure or praise: (or a tendency to rehabilitate character): Hegelian view of history,—the race-spirits: feebleness of calculation and design: personal history out of date: records of courts neglected: attempt to detect the "Will of the People."

§ 3. Fallacy of transferring to the mass or its assembled representatives the "good nature" of the average man: problematic wisdom of entrusting general welfare to the debates of rancorous partisans: acceptance by the people of Cæsarism: representation impossible, witness the Conciliar period: cannot too high a price be paid for order and uniformity?: "all such legislation in favour of the class in power": "attempts to hold Colossus together a crime against freedom and nationalism": we lack data and principle for settling this question: defence of particularism no paradox: yet (from the Hegelian standpoint) the mission of the empire is justified by its result: Cæsarism represented the will of the age, in spite of the sporadic mutiny of the parts.

§ 4. Imperial system represented the Idea by a Person, not by an Assembly, by a principle of unity, not of discord: loyalty to-day to modern kingship: origin of emperor and king in armed force: but sentiment and allegiance gather round: unique factor in modern government capable of exciting the warmer emotions: forces in modern society strongly centrifugal, though Imperialism may provide artificial unity: language of loyalty, even if overstrained, better than the fictitious invective of political party:

attitude to Monarchy witnesses that all political life is not exhausted in hatred, disrespect, and self-seeking.

§ 5. Choice of limits to the period: the Comnenian "tyranny" not a true continuation of the imperial system: Zonaras' severe indictment of the recent development in the constitution: the empire founded on law not caprice, the emperor a chief magistrate of a free people: the final change to seclusion and irresponsibility took place in the first half of the eleventh century: object to search in cultured critics or in popular opinion the real views of the native population on the system, and to detect hidden springs of action.

§ 6. Form and plan of the work: general survey of a period tentative, suggestive, and subjective: art of passing judgment on an age something different from the patience of the minute explorer: the two necessary for the student, but may be separated in working: dangers and limitations of the *subjective* historian and the general impression: he confines himself to suggestion the account, like the period embraced, arbitrary: yet a place still left amid accumulating material, for the philosophical interpreter of tendencies.

§ 7. This kind of half-intuitive criticism not the highest form of mental work: the real contributor to human advance, the worker in an austere and narrow field: in *subjective* studies, no certainty and no completeness: yet this type of mind, aware of its limits lays no claim to an impossible omniscience: seeks to bring out one aspect only of an age: does not profess to rival the specialist in his own department: neglect of war and religion: (reply to unfair charge against the spirit and influence of the Gospel: a instance of the limit of a historian's acumen): strict limit and self restraint observed.

BOOK I

THE PAGAN EMPIRE: THE CIVILIAN MONARCHY AND THE MILITARY REACTION

CHAPTER I

The Reign of Domitian and the Era of the Earlier Antonines (81–180 A.D.)

§ 1. Peculiar position of the third Flavian, a plebeian and untried in active employment: this combination hitherto unknown actual rarity of the favourite Cæsar of romance: Domitian a strong personal ruler in spite of his disadvantages: the untested son a *parvenu*, whose middle-class reorganisation had not made men forget the brilliance of Nero's age.

§ 2. Faculty for personal and painstaking administration found in unlikely characters: peril of the Senate and prejudice of Tacitus: yet Domitian completed his father's work: he rendered possible the golden age of the Antonines: unswerving maintenance of public order and central control: the Flavian restoration (in which Domitian bore a share) saved the world from triumviral anarchy and the barbarian: Antonines reaped advantage of Domitian's work and of the reaction against it.

§ 3. The good emperors realised the ideal of Augustus in his most generous mood: Senate recovered dormant rights: its title to elect a world-ruler: Senate represented the reverse of cosmopolitan ideas, or uniform government: provincial welcome to the liberal policy of Augustus: personal guarantee given, as in Queen Victoria's manifesto to India: the New Testament bears striking witness to the *responsible* government then introduced, from Augustus to Nero.

§ 4. The Provinces benefited, not Rome or Italy: Senate stood for reaction and privilege: in no sense representative: the Emperor created to annul distinctions: in effect, the Senate exercises less influence in this period of deference than amid the turmoil of the next: "apostolic succession": the *imperium* transmitted by its possessor: "Adoption and Grace": one chief duty to provide for the succession: (this elsewhere strangely neglected in imperial annals): elsewhere haphazard, here policy and order reign.

§ 5. Problem and alternative of *elective* or *hereditary* monarchy: the *official* and the *patrimonial* conception: two needs not readily found combined, *efficiency* and *stability:* limitation of kingly prerogative often due to respectful anxiety for its safety: elevation above daily business needful for prestige and security: advantage of not holding monarchy accountable for official aberration: a despotic absolutism entangles the sovereign in every false step, every unjust blow, while it removes him from any real control: reserve-force of constitutional monarchy to-day: veritable deadlock of parliamentarism: the king, representative rather of the *nation* than of the *government:* occasional and significant appeal to the sovereign to govern as well as reign: human and family interest in kingship, adapted to democracy.

§ 6. Final condemnation of the republican form of government: appeal to theory rather than to sentiment: true democracy implies the increasing interest and co-operation of the average man, not a scientific committee with unlimited powers: conflict of the two ideals, patient consultation of the people and Regimentation: Liberal fears of a "referendum": (empire developed from gracious supervisor into scientific administrator: the loss obvious though the development inevitable): *official* view (in a republic) regards men as an arbitrary aggregate of atoms, the *patrimonial* and

hereditary, as a collection of families: power (in the modern State) not parental, but an expedient to deal with man's native cowardice and malice: force, not moral suasion, basis of political life.

§ 7. Cæsar soon assumed the parental attitude: but he never forgot his chief duty—efficiency of an untiring executive: therefore removable in case of failure, as in Temple of Aricia: against this merciless State-view, the parental idea makes protest: and of this the adoptive emperors are typical: efflorescence of Hellenic, extinction of Roman letters: substitution of imperial functionary for local autonomy: decay of the Curia, and of interest in public affairs: signs of weakness evident under Marcus: character of Marcus, satiety and despondency: sinister influence of the Stoic philosophy: an endorsement of the common tendency to abstention: in truth, the sage alone had *no* theory, *no* working hypothesis of the world: the last word not *duty* but *indifference*: profoundly decadent cult of a dead and meaningless universe.

CHAPTER II

The Pseudo-Antonines; or, the Afro-Syrian House and the Regimen of Women (180–235 A.D.)

§ 1. Anomalous and surprising character of the half-century following Marcus' death: various characteristics,—the Age of the Pseudo-Antonines, of the female influence, of the Jurists, of a provincial and anti-Roman reaction, of the boy-emperors, of the "Grand-Vizierate": in spite of the confusion, steady working of the administrative machine: the wildness of titular autocracy and the stability of the system: vitality of the empire.

§ 2. Chief qualification of the Emperor,—*personal* service: where a modern king uses the language of frank absolutism, he employed modest tone of a delegate: formal recognition of power endangers its efficacy, political influence being in the main indirect: cause of the long continuance of the system,—Cæsar not the source, only the executive: frequent rekindling of the Cæsarian Idea, personal rule: this age marked by delegation: Antoninus IV. disinclined for hard work: a Nero without his artistic temperament: the Viziers, Perennis and Cleander: Plautianus the African vice-sovereign under Severus: the two former sacrificed to popular clamour, the last killed by the heir-apparent.

§ 3. Imperial dislike of Rome: the proposed partition of the empire between Antoninus V. and VI.: frequent absences of Severus taught Rome true function of a prince lay elsewhere: regular power of the Crown exerted by Papinian and by the Syrian empress-mother: Domna succeeded by her sister Mæsa and her two nieces in the control of the government: definite

surrender of public business by Antoninus VIII.: acceptance of a colleague on the ground of "divine duties."

§ 4. Asiatic Lamaism: two incompatible notions in sovereignty, motionless pivot and ubiquitous executive: the conflict of sanctity and efficiency: the immured sovereign of the Mossyni: the Potala: the purdah: the later caliphate: emergence of the Mikado and the Dalai-Lama: suggested reversion in China to the older Manchu tradition of imperial accessibility.

§ 5. The proposal of Soæmias foredoomed to failure: the emperor *de jure* must personally exercise his rights *de facto*: the invasion of Roman temples by a foreign cult a mere episode: religion not an independent domain but a department of State: exclusiveness of Christian and Emesene claims provoked resentment: both refused an autonomous sphere: dislike of extremes by the best Roman statesmen: hate of the Black Stone of Elagabalus may have reinforced the moral revival of the next age.

§ 6. Unhappy issue of the experiment at reform under Alexander: inopportune mildness of female and civilian government: very merits of a private citizen, the vices of a sovereign ruler: people tired of an autocracy in commission, as of a freehold in perpetual abeyance: Alexander refused the title, but pursued the strictly civilian policy of the Antonines: early intimations of the coming divorce in civil and military functions: futile struggle of the pacific element.

§ 7. The distinction of function and reforms of Diocletian suggested and anticipated under the Afro-Syrian house: deference to the Senate in certain important branches of State: fruitless attempt to define the sphere of Senate and Emperor: dreary record of mutual distrust repeated in each vigorous reign: no personal ties of devotion to the sovereign of the hour: the pretenders, until safely enthroned at Rome, commonly posed as the restorers of Senate's prerogative: the reign of Maximinus I. a period of senatorial activity: revived "consulate" of Maximus and Balbinus: conspicuous surrender of direct control under the third Gordian: no abiding influence (as with modern monarchs) of pathetic appeal of royal infancy: with Timesicles, the days of powerful Viziers are over: resumption of personal and perilous rule.

§ 8. Premonitory symptoms of decay and confusion: the robber-bands: the town-garrisons under Severus I.: the failure of the municipal system, and the growing powers of the governor: mild and humane legislation of the Septimian age: gradual disappearance of Roman features in uniform administration: subjectivity in ruler and malcontent: yet the beginnings to be found of social distinctions of the fourth century as well as of Diocletian's severance of civil and military spheres.

CHAPTER III

The Moral Revival, the Suggested Dyarchy, and the Illyrian Line (235–285 A.D.)

§ 1. Injustice of the usual verdict on the age of the "Thirty Tyrants": the period of misfortune marked by a general revival of simplicity, energy, and Roman spirit: devotion to perilous public service: the claims of the Senate again seriously heard: puritan rigour and enactments against vice: close of the Asiatic House signal for reaction: stern morality of Maximin: heroism of the Decii; the millenary of Rome: Æmilian's offer (253) of divided duties; represents the tendency of the time: denial of hereditary rights and aversion to minors.

§ 2. The claims of the Senate something more than a mere pretence: respect paid to the defenceless body that defied Maximin: documentary evidence of the Senate's activity: civilian sympathies of Gallienus: hopes of Probus, "soldiers soon to become superfluous": the famous prohibition to carry arms (under Gallienus); capable of another interpretation: republican cast of the administration: Diocletian's different solution, civil and military orders accountable solely to the Emperor: Aurelian began the tendency to pomp and absolutism: traditional feud of army and civil assembly too strong.

§ 3. Solidarity of the General Staff: the discipline and training of the staff-corps: since the failure of Severus II. rise of great military caste, with uniform traditions: in spite of the frequent vacancies and massacres due to soldiers' mutiny, few instances of treachery, and many of generous pardon and humane treatment: recognition of foreign Augusti: the period by no means a riot of egoism: notable cases of postponement of private interest: new influence of the Pannonian staff-corps.

§ 4. The real culprits the soldiers: evils of a decentralised army: fallacy of the local militia: analogy of the Algerian government: Ianissaries and Mamelukes: empire definitely settled upon a peace-footing at its birth: end of civil strife and internal dissension the great aim: the perils and inroads of the third century not foreseen in the first: provincial armies did not come within scope of original liberalism of the emperors: moral suasion, not force, upheld Roman sway in the interior: city-states already in decay: Rome exercised a civilian tutelage: after 200 A.D. realised that civilian régime needed profound modification: increase and turbulence of armed forces.

§ 5. Extreme danger of independent military commands: the *pronunciamentos* of third century, mixture of patriotic and regimental sentiment: a general called on to meet a crisis must have plenary power of an Augustus: did not represent local dis-

content: Roman spirit displayed in the line of Gaulish emperors: but the soldiers sacrificed incompetence without pity: very rarely oppressed the provincials: discontent of powerful armies at hard camp-tasks: repentance sincere at least in the case of Aurelian's murder.

§ 6. Imperial attitude to the new races: warfare, alliance, or incorporation? no consistent policy: attitude of Tacitus the historian to the Barbarians of the Northern frontier (c. 100 A.D.): his anomalous Imperialism and sympathy with the free: he admired but he could not welcome to citizenship: problem acute after middle of second century: yet riparian frontiers (Rhine, Danube, Euphrates) maintained from Augustus to Theodosius: no permanent loss, three cases of voluntary cession: real and momentous changes of frontier and loss of continuous territory on East under Heraclius († 641) and Romanus IV. († 1071): wearisome inconclusiveness of aimless tourneys: signal difference from Northern problem demanding a clear policy.

§ 7. Shall the Barbarian be received or excluded?—empire cosmopolitan with certain reservation, no desire for unlimited expansion, as in Mongolian hordes: offered peaceful home to immigrants: instances of liberal policy in early empire, bodyguard of Augustus and armies of Agricola: nothing strictly incompatible between Teutonic personality and Roman law: depopulation by plague: terror after Decius' death, 251 A.D.: serious purpose of Valerian, *divide et impera:* liberal policy of Gallienus (253-268): his Barbarian wife, his tact and diplomacy: Gallienus a type of later Teutonizer: best recruits and best colonists: Claudius II. revives older attitude, war to the knife: Aurelian abandons Dacia: Probus renews policy of firmness and of conciliation: earliest (c. 280) to settle Barbarians in thousands on Roman soil: two most salient features, settlers and cultivators of alien race, semi-foreign military caste.

CHAPTER IV

Centralised Absolutism: or, the System of Diocletian and Constantine (285–337 A.D.)

§ 1. All political systems as they develop tend to centralisation: State-supremacy revived as a principle about the time of Religious reform: Machiavelli's text-book, apotheosis of autocracy; abiding result also of French Revolution, not personal liberty but central control: "Centralism" vindicated in American Civil War: odd result of (so-called) enfranchisement, seizure by minorities or unrepresentative factions of this uncontrolled power: government not less absolute but more frank and continuous in empire:

however elected, each emperor inherits and preserves Augustan tradition: public opinion approved success of Diocletian: though the reaction excessive in the direction of Centralism, we must praise the work.

§ 2. Record of this half-century simple: recovery of central control and safety of frontiers (284–305): downfall of the artificial system of co-optation (305–323): "apostolical succession"; falsified by the instincts of a parent, the sympathies of the troops: reaction under Constantine (323–337) to the hereditary principle regarded with favour: his liberal and cosmopolitan policy, to new creed and new races: nowhere public opinion and belief so well defined as in the Church: her weight thrown into scale in favour of personal monarchy and regular succession.

§ 3. First aim of Diocletian to restore sacrosanct character of the ruler: Orientation deliberate; to rescue from the roughness and peril of a camp: subtle change comes over the sovereign power: its avowed source in earlier times from people's delegation: secular and popular basis of Cæsarism: elective principle still recognised in later Teutonic royalty: absolutism of the new modern State independent of *recognitio* and anointing: "the king never dies, and can do no wrong," such modern views utterly at variance with Roman principle and procedure: Cæsar is personally responsible: no indefeasible right in a royal family.

§ 4. In transition from classical to modern conception Diocletian marks an important stage: he removes emperor from camp to palace: Cæsar at first acknowledged executive of an unarmed assembly: State-needs summoned him to the distant frontiers, as "Warden of the Marches": infrequent visits to Rome after 200 A.D.: impossible (in change of imperial function) to revive Rome as seat and centre of empire: *divina domus:* household servants usurp pre-eminence: influence lodged elsewhere than in the State-officials or magistrates: next epoch will show the secret power of courtiers: the recent seclusion of the Manchu sovereign: Diocletian seeks to retain *effectiveness* as well as *security:* emperor still must lead armies in person: in peaceful interludes power slipped into hands of palace-favourites: value of itinerant sovereignty (Hadrian and Edward VII.): Diocletian seeking to restore personal rule, ended it.

§ 5. Yet he is no bold innovator (Napoleon or Peter): germs of his reform found in earlier period: he sums up chief tendencies of last era, not wholly unconstructive amidst its disorder: three chief features, divorce of eastern and western realms, of civil and military function, barbarian as farmer and soldier: partnership in the *imperium;* legend of Severus' scheme of partition: not less significant if apocryphal: repeated divisions after Decius († 251): different problems of East and West,

§ 6. Diocletian followed precedent in severing East and West:

German replacement in Gaul; but strong Roman culture and tradition survived: the East always alien, the Roman emperor a stranger there: protectorate over racial feuds and an earlier, more perfect civilisation: never penetrates into real life of East (which is not political): indefinable change in Constantine due to his "Orientation": Diocletian disguises completeness of the rupture, and may have been unconscious of it: he consummated the policy begun under the African Severus: the clearly original contribution of Diocletian, the first to disappear, viz. apprenticeship of the Augustus and regular promotion by merit, as in other ranks of State-service.

BOOK II

PROBLEMS OF THE NEW MONARCHY AND THE NEW SUBJECTS; OR, THE LIMITATIONS OF AUTOCRACY AND THE BARBARIAN OFFER

CHAPTER I

The New System of Caste and Officialism; the Severance of Civil and Military Orders; and the Influx of Aliens

§ 1. In the fourth century is completed the specialising process: guide and pioneer here also Severus I.: distinction of civilian and soldier; could be no longer delayed: natural tendency to secure expert opinion in a limited province: early Roman was peasant-farmer and volunteer: revolution in economics: impossible task of Senate, lacking agents and force: moral sanction and penalty form basis of earliest community: law, penalty, police, a later and degenerate development: no effective machinery of control in ancient state: reluctant admission that the use of force is necessary: in decay of religious and tribal tradition, egoism questions and despises convention.

§ 2. Rise of self-interest (against public service): expansion of the horizon, and variation of tribal sanctions: force (under early empire) secures peace: arms lodged with the emperor: pacific function of the Senate: difficulty of arranging a "division of labour": was it jealousy of emperor, or the indolent pride of Senate? supple and trustworthy agents of despotism oust the older ruling class: Senate an impossible co-operator with liberal imperialism.

§ 3. Military revival under African dynasty in the interests of public order: warranted distrust of the Senate: school of professional soldiers essential, detached from other interests: gradual withdrawal of noble or wealthy class from active service: immunities granted to individuals: the tendency merely culminates

in Gallien's edict : the exclusion, there depicted as piece of tyranny, already an accomplished fact : tempting to fix division of civil and military command in the provinces under Severus Alexander (222-235) : need of the continuous and undistracted activity of the specialist : no chance for easy interchange between the rival spheres : social life in third century comparatively undisturbed : curious peace of the six months' interregnum (275–276) : this stability referred to orderly procedure of Senate or Senatorial Committee or Privy Council, dating from minority of Severus II.

§ 4. The "Germanising" of soil and army of Rome : tendency of civilisation to specialise and isolate into narrow and unsympathetic spheres : government (once part and parcel of each citizen's life) passes to experts : alarming indifference or ignorance of popular government : nobles and people under empire did not wish to administer or to fight : decay of Municipal System after Antonines : emperors invoked to administer as well as supervise, govern as well as reign : not a tyrannical encroachment : two distinct needs as two distinct orders in State, defend and provide money for defence : tiller and warrior separated earlier : rough division between those who paid and those who worked : increase of taxes : worth while to procure most notable expert by offering not a "living wage" but a prize : sharp division of the official world from the mass.

§ 5. Contrast between taxpayer and tax-collector deepens : aim to keep the civilian at his undistracted task of making honey, *sic vos non vobis* : artificial support of the paying class, not tyrannical but on lines of mistaken economy : the *curia* a prison-house : in the centres of urban life great comfort and luxury : pampered paupers, disinclined for active work : we may suspect a certain scorn entertained for military calling : serious studies rhetorical : leisure snatched from spectacles devoted to style not to public business : singular carelessness and detachment of letters : old Roman spirit confined to the industrious princes and their emissaries : governing class through no fault of its own, stood aloof : citizen wields neither spear nor spade : tillage and legion recruited by foreigners : the most determined champion of order and the frontier are most inclined to welcome external aid : Society in the fourth century, taxpayers, military caste, alien colonists, and official hierarchy.

CHAPTER II

Legitimacy ; or, the Dynastic Epoch and the Successors of Constantine (337–457 A.D.)

§ 1. Most striking feature in this period, the triumph of the hereditary principle : revival of feminine influence : resulting predominance of the chamberlain over civil and military element

inconstancy of the Romans as to birthright in the imperial line : failure of direct succession in the early empire : Antoninus IV., V., and VIII. : sons in partnership under the military emperors : fraternal claims of Quintillus and Florianus disallowed.

§ 2. Diocletian substitutes the son-in-law for the son : right of succession passes through females : a compromise between Nature and Reason : Constantine overthrows, reverting to the patrimonial conception of the State : the rest of the fourth and half the fifth century occupied in the West by sons in the direct line : new families seek further legitimation by alliance with earlier : Eastern realm had unhappy experience of Gallus, c. 353 : hereditary sway only begins in the East with Arcadius : henceforward sister or wife of Augustus exerts influence and devolves the sceptre : this followed by "nepotism" or free election, until after the death of Heraclius († 641).

§ 3. Character of the administration in this palmy period of Legitimacy : the early principate did not contemplate elevation of untried merit : demanded vigilant, personal government and was in touch with popular will : its duty to supervise nobles and functionaries in the interest of the whole : basis utilitarian not sentimental : this task impossible for youth : discontent at the earlier feminine influence (200–235) : changes initiated at opening of fourth century harmless to inventors, dangerous to immature successors, who knew only dignity of office : palace-camarilla : and danger of revolution, even during Dynastic period.

§ 4. Personal loyalty found only in their own households : fault of senatorial pride and absence of the modern gulf between sovereign and subject : emperors driven to select trustworthy agents : whole republican system aimed at arresting, as imperial at facilitating, prompt obedience to command : great expenditure of friction to secure equilibrium and resist advance : *status quo* the ideal : perilous reaction when Senator as proconsul armed with regal powers : but the emperor, as "patriot king" aimed at the general interest, and recruited his bureaux and armies outside the higher circles : Civil Service crystallises into definite form from 130 A.D. : pressure of new duties on Cæsar a proof of loyalty and confidence : imperial rule less costly and more just.

§ 5. The Civil Service in its turn became a "Frankenstein's Monster" : decay of any personal sentiment during the Anarchy (235–285) : the great machine moved independent of the sovereign of the hour : first duty of reconstruction is to guard against evils of personal caprice : formulation of absolutism invariably implies its practical restriction : real influence in a State nearly always elsewhere than in admitted "Seat of Sovereignty" : Romans merciless towards a ruler who failed : even through meritorious pursuits (Gratian's hunting, Nero's art) : want of moral perspective a legacy of Stoicism : responsibility of the prince : Christian in-

fluences ("a trust from above") introduce "right divine to govern wrong."

§ 6. Permanent officials (army or palace) have the start of any prince: this period a long struggle between actual and nominal wielders of power: monarchs' suspicion of their agents and retinue: in this period, general-staff of army final arbiter but only in exceptional crisis: secret influence on ordinary administration: openness and frankness of military intervention: obscure intrigues and problematic policy of palace favourites.

§ 7. Long list of usurpers and pretenders in the Dynastic period: often a vigorous protest against youthful or incapable rulers: some principle can be observed besides mere ambition in these mutinies: first appearance of the barbarian influence and protectorate: seclusion of the sovereign led directly to such insurrection: struggle for supremacy between officials of the palace and Mercenaries outside: question to be settled (on different lines by East and West), "Shall a barbarian Shogun exist side by side with a Mikado?"

CHAPTER III

Liberal Imperialism; or, the Functions of the Emperor and the Proffer of Barbarian Loyalty

§ 1. Narrow exclusiveness of the City-state: monarch stands for liberalism and expansion: he is compelled to represent the public welfare: feudalism (a revival and a retrogression) distrusts and thwarts monarchy: foe of class-privilege and exemption: attack on monarchical institutions from sincere but reactionary minorities: triumph of "Liberty" usually implies victory of a class: Magna Charta or the Revolution of 1689: universal suffrage would have negatived all the supposed Liberal movements in our national history: empire the creation of the age, not of personal ambition: the liberalism of Julius too overt: disguise of policy under religious nationalism and reaction under Augustus: wise moderation in opening the world to uniform government: no false deference to superlatives and logical exactness.

§ 2. Emperors well abreast of their time: gradual disappearance of special privilege (Rome and Italy): fresh requests for admission: policy towards barbarians: new duties of the principate on the frontiers: success of the imperial regimen in the Mediterranean basin: war once a part of the citizen's duties, as yet unspecialised: profoundly pacific condition of primitive communities: Hobbes' mistake: moral basis of early society: as world grows older and fuller, appeal to force becomes more general, in absence of other agreed code: emptiness of the early world and rule of tribal custom and use: in a motley aggregate

all these conflicting conceptions neutralise each other: thus an empire must appeal to arbitrary Will, not to precedent.

§ 3. The Roman empire alone supplanted greed and caprice of dominant caste by humanitarian principles: relation of subjects to imperial race: early empire reverted to pacific tradition for two centuries, and maintained order in city-states, without suppressing autonomy: altered needs of the third century: thus chief witness to value of the system in its pacific aim: when warlike need befell unawares, arms became monopoly of a class: army the most liberal of all the imperial institutions: models of domestic faith, pioneers of culture, reclaimers of nature: gradual inclusion of barbarians; all the better emperors friends of the new races: "naturalised subjects with equal rights to the original stock" (territorial *v.* civil conception): was the remedy of barbarian soldiers and settlers a disintegrating force?

§ 4. Welcome extended to barbarians a logical outcome of the whole imperial policy: ample proof of Gothic loyalty: the pretenders of the third century never anti-Roman: value of the Gallic and British usurpers: against this feasible policy of generous admittance, two emperors of weak and stubborn temperament set themselves; Valens and Honorius: Teutonic influence would have undermined bureaucratic supremacy: this not a disadvantage: the Teutonic monarchies, unable to found abiding systems in West because direct Roman influence removed, yet looked with affection on Eastern Cæsar.

§ 5. Advantage of Teutonic individualism, to stem tide toward corrupt centralisation: gradual enlargement of sphere of government: genuine confidence reposed in emperor: welfare depends not on formula of constitution but on national character and behaviour and control of officials: functionaries of absolute monarch or free republic alike need strict supervision: similar feeling to-day (1907) in France and Russia: difficulty of controlling governing classes: emperor supplants a venal Senate: growing complexity in the official world: conservatism of this well-organised and unanimous body, fatal to any project of reform, as well as to hasty change: yet credit of failure or success fell upon shoulders of one man; the later emperors at the mercy of their advisers.

§ 6. Might not the fresh element of subjectivity have allied with conception of Roman law and unity: inspiriting force of Teutonic chivalry, incapable of devout respect to abstraction, only of affection to persons: this reversal to rudiments and simple things of life by no means a retrogression: inrush of the fresh air into stifling atmosphere: antidote to prevalent fatalism in knight-errantry: new alliance suggested between *imperium* and *libertas*: evil of unquestioning obedience to law—a trait of savagery: the Teutons happily unacquainted with Stoicism: failure of the alliance lay with the indecisive and treacherous councils of Theodosius' successors: in the West the barbarian expelled Cæsar, in the East Cæsar expelled the barbarian.

CHAPTER IV

The Era of the Patricians; or, the Barbarian Protectorate

§ 1. Three main divisions—Church, Army, Civil Service: success of early empire largely due to specialised capacity of the private imperial agents: unpretentious and trustworthy men of business: the Army; the Church (speculation as to value of its alliance to empire unprofitable): emergence of Church as independent is the final step in the specialising tendency: finely drawn lines of distinction—class, caste, and task: solitariness of the provincial towns, full intercourse only with the capitals: tendency to uniformity and isolation.

§ 2. Large surrender of direct imperial authority: independence of army-corps and Church, a prelude to the Middle Ages: episcopate an autonomous corporation: Constantine allying with Church, Theodosius leaving a barbarian general guardian of the realm, two pioneers of mediævalism: implied a denial of State-autocracy and uniqueness: actual restriction of plenary power of sovereign by these two foreign allies: curious decline in imperial influence in the West during the fifth century: three significant words, Patrician, Patriarch, Patrimony.

§ 3. List of Western Patricians (or Regents) (386-526): imaginary chronicle of this period on the lines of an annalist: Stilico, Aëtius, Aspar, Ricimer, Gundobad: Zeno appoints patrician to govern Italy with the consent of the Senate: systematic control and supervision of the "Regency" in Italy: use of term "patrician" as regent or viceroy, in Gaul, in Italy, and in the Exarchates of Africa and Ravenna: implied full delegation of sovereign power except the recognition of independence: witness of the coinage: under this decent fiction Western realm slowly and peacefully expired: Odovacar and Theodoric = High Commissioners sent to govern Italy: their authority strictly derivative.

§ 4. The large and gradual colonies of barbarians in the West freely chose their own "king": side by side existed "Roman" population, inured to deep respect for imperial emissary: trial of Arvandus a witness to survival of earlier methods: Syagrius a rebel: Clovis had direct credentials from the emperor: craving for legitimacy satisfied by the union, tribal king and Roman official: curious anomalies of this tendency to seek ratification from a weaker but more dignified potentate.

§ 5. Summary of history of title "Patrician": connotation gradually arose of father, parent, patron: new use of an adaptable title: applied by a deliberate policy and the popes to the Frank "Shoguns": association of lay-support and protective patronage: the Regent not acknowledged as master, and his title derived from

Pontiff speaking in name of ancient city and of S. Peter: gradual rise of claims of lay-protectors, patrons, and advocates of ecclesiastical property: post transferred from father to son in Middle Ages: loyal protector becomes beneficiary, trust a prize.

§ 6. Need of "patronage" instinctive: found among all peoples when as yet pretensions and efficacy of State small: kindness to captive in war: the grades of freedmen and serf: tie of "patron" and "client" dictated by Nature (among Romans and Teutons alike): voluntary and personal relations: sentiment of feudalism common to both: always destined to be strong when the State is weak: the empire charged itself with all duties and ousted private patronage: Southern Europe gladly abandoned these safeguards: perversion of the new State-agents into oppressors,—hateful alike to prince and people: "Defensor" = State's counterweight to itself: anomalous "immunity" under Merovingians: the emperor free to choose his own protector, regent, or patron: so Pope free to choose his patrician: a noble and generous relation: corrupted in time by demand for personal gain or advantage from trust and patronage.

§ 7. Church and Army left in undisputed possession of West: mediæval atmosphere of Epiphanius: worship of relics in the old capital: we now leave the survey of the West, and bid farewell to the empire: in hands of priest and knight: not till seventh century does State reassert her authority over these co-ordinate and rival powers.

§ 8. Strange and significant difference in destiny of Odovacar and Zeno: both barbarians: mere accident Tarasicordissa becomes full Augustus: why solution so different in East and West?: no settled anti-barbarian policy in West: spasmodic fright and massacre (408–454): definite desire among privy councillors of East to be rid of the Teuton: influence of Pulcheria: Byzantine "loyalty": in this contrast lies secret of future development.

BOOK III

RECONSTRUCTION AND COLLAPSE UNDER THE HOUSES OF JUSTIN AND HERACLIUS: VICTORY OF CIVILIAN AND REACTION TO MILITARY FORMS

CHAPTER I

The Eastern Rejection of the Teutonic Patronate; and the Adoptive Period of Mature Merit (457–527 A.D.)

§ 1. Easterns refuse "division of labour" suggested by the new settlers already triumphant in West: the Augustus at Byzantium never sank into a puppet or a mere civilian: retained the supremacy over Church and Army, already dividing between them the

Western hemisphere: solid and constructive work after Marcian (†457): maturity of the sovereign and the adoptive principle the most striking features till Phocas (†610): firm control and personal government: almost no "power behind the throne": Leo's crime relieved East from barbarian tutelage: decisive character of this act.

§ 2. Feminine influence revives: contrast with earlier and later periods: prominence of women during the fifth and sixth centuries: female influence greatest when indirect: (but this is true also of all authority): election of monarch amid all the order of Roman law, never reduced to system: left to pure accident: perhaps in deference to fiction of republican magistracy: "dynasty and lineage," Teutonic not classical: leads to sacrosanct aloofness of modern royalty: emperor must govern in person: ingenuous popular sympathy in favour of heredity (Maurice, 584): fiction of free election never formally abandoned.

§ 3. This uncertainty, a source of peril and strength: elective principle a reservoir of vitality: conception of government utilitarian: the union of permanence and conservatism with fitful reform suited the age: the Byzantine monarchy no expression of nationality: our chief concern to-day to make succession certain, disputed election impossible: yet the Roman method excluded the evils both of feudalism and of bureaucracy: care of Marcian, Leo, Zeno, Anastasius, for fiscal reform: average man to-day prefers firm personal rule, to noble or mercantile tyranny: Cæsar truly representative.

§ 4. Disappointing character of the annalists who record the age: silence on nearly all topics of public interest: difficult to trace slow and secret development, which issues in a later condition of society: *e.g.* the tenth century in Italian history: or the collapse in the seventh: the modern historian reconstructs from slender evidence: he is never competent to represent the age in all its various aspects—military, literary, religious, financial: excuse for coæval writers: impossible for a contemporary to understand current: the emperors spoke for the people from whom this sprang: whatever their race or training, become exponents of Roman tradition: a "constitutional monarchy" and continuous.

§ 5. A half-century of quiet recovery and defensive measures: the populace divided between town and country, with widely differing character: turbulent and metaphysical: potent influence of the Colour-factions: fortunate absence (in religious and racial feuds) of "Representative" Institutions: ceaseless dogmatic debate tore asunder the empire and opened the gates to the infidel: the country—a silence of unrecorded decay: municipal weakness: small owner ousted: as to-day, anxious reformers unable to arrest decline: good will then, as now, powerless against operation of law.

§ 6. Criticism of later empire in default of certain data for indictment, resolved into this question,—was survival and integrity of realm necessary for peoples' welfare? : were the manful efforts of the imperial line justified, worth while? : at least races then under Byzantine sway not since manifested aptitude for freedom : Finlay represents sometimes devotion, sometimes hatred, to the central government : no one suggested a substitute for the imperial system : emperors fostered and encouraged local assemblies in vain.

§ 7. "The empire suppressed nationality" : the conception is modern : nor is it bound to be lasting : essence of nationalism, exclusive and suspicious : an empire implies protectorate of many diverse races : Rome justified in its efforts to restore integrity and maintain unity : alternative, chaos not local freedom : emperor losing his own individuality in the Roman tradition, finds faithful agents in the task in civilian and soldier alike.

CHAPTER II

The Restoration; or, Period of Conquest and Central Control under Justinian (527–565 A.D.)

§ 1. Mysterious figure of Justinian, centre of his reign and master of his ministers : singular impression left upon the men of his time : scanty and mythical evidence as to his personal character : his reign = the records of his lieutenants : dissolution and premature decline of the barbarian kingdoms : seeds of disunion and discontent in Teutonic monarchy on classic soil : success of Theodoric due to personal tact, not to lasting merits of system : early degeneracy of the ruling stock : no doubt wars of restoration costly and desolating : weakness underlay the splendid surface : even to-day we are by no means decided how far sacrifices to imperialism are justified?

§ 2. Yet the steadfast policy of recuperation intelligible : motive for reunion largely religious : the protectorate in Italy was in decay and held no secret or germ of future advance : Gothic and Vandal Arianism specially prejudicial to a final settlement : the finality and integrity of Catholicism ministered to the spirit of reaction : conversion to full orthodoxy marks a step forward in political as well as religious life.

§ 3. Scanty evidence as to general feeling throughout the reign : the Roman world endorsed Justinian's forward policy : authors agreed on the mischievous system of finance : its oppressive incidence hard to explain, nor can a modern critic throw stones : Byzantium did not control its agents : "feudal" tendency already rampant to subtract office from central oversight : Justinian's reconquest one form of protest against centrifugal particularism : he found it more difficult to govern than to conquer.

§ 4. In sum, barbarian monarchies still at mercy of great personalities (Gaiseric, Theodoric, and later Charles): no impersonal tradition as reserve-force: steadfastness of the empire to its mission: no cohesion elsewhere or organic development: Justinian looks backwards and forwards: true to the past but also an innovator: no doubt many preferred and still prefer hazard to orderly organisation: monotonous and rigid caste: atmosphere of finality: we cannot deny the latent weakness which afterwards emerged.

§ 5. Baffling and anomalous features of this era: "period of transition," a universal excuse: yet admissible for this age of silent change: population of empire replaced: novel institutions under old titles: irresolute hesitation of the historian; forced to arrive at parallel and inconsistent conclusions: conflicting verdict on state of subject, of provinces, of bureaucracy, of imperial character, of value of entire imperial system.

§ 6. This indecision no discredit to historian: all final judgments of an obscure age must be largely *subjective*: verdict of these pages favourable to character and wisdom of rulers: Justinian and Augustus at a personal disadvantage because of the enduring grandeur of their achievement in politics and law: both simple and industrious men, not superhuman figures: their fabled autocracy dazzles and misleads: simple personal virtues and untiring energy of Justinian: is the unfavourable verdict due to disappointed placemen?: economies in the civil service: riches of realm accumulating in official class: decay of civil service as a lucrative career in this age: Justinian curtailed profit and abolished sinecures: their power disastrously renewed against the central authority in next age: two main aims; recover Roman prestige, secure the frontier: solid phalanx of bureaucratic opposition lay behind the "pacifist" speech of John of Cappadocia.

§ 7. "He starved the military defences": misfortune of Justinian's longevity: declining energy of his latter years: relaxing care in the last period (548-565): determined to maintain submission of military caste to civil power: Byzantium set itself to secure the precedence of the "mandarinate": value of the Byzantine bureaucracy: permanence of empire largely due to it: yet needed control and the discipline of adversity: often a corrupt and unduly privileged class.

§ 8. Subservience of autocracy in the last three reigns to the civilians: tradition that emperor must not leave palace: military renown reaped by a subordinate: sinews of war already relaxed before accession of Justinian: in the period of vigour he supported army, but reverted to suspicious civilian attitude at close: reason for distrust: strange Teutonic *comitatus* of Belisarius: jealousy of civilians towards army: small independent commands: alien birth of chiefs each with national levies: curious paradox, aggressive

yet anti-military reign : hindrances to Belisarius outcome of recent policy not of imperial envy : mutiny and caprice avenged arrears of pay and bad system of promotion : Justinian tried to substitute *stone* defences : these dangerous forces disappear within next fifty years : different lines of Heraclian and "Isaurian" reorganisation : final tribute to the labours and policy of Justinian.

CHAPTER III

Success of the Forces arrayed against Absolutism; Overthrow of the Empire (565–610 A.D.)

§ 1. Chief crisis in later Roman history, opening years of seventh century : Heraclius the second founder of the empire : what led to this abrupt decline? : institutions of Justinian a heap of ruins : personal influence ; still counts for much in the higher political issues : the turning-point the massacre of Maurice and his family (602) : gratitude of Persia turned to bitterest hatred : absence of the dynastic principle : the elevation of Phocas precipitated wars which opened Persian and Roman realm to Islam : sense of impending doom : despondency of Justinian's latter period : dissident aristocracy, estranged peoples, unpopular rulers : how far ruler bound to invite co-operation of people : seemed craven to shirk responsibility : the people largely to blame for tranquil surrender of rights to an over-worked and over-conscientious magistrate.

§ 2. Greatest problem of government, not how to maintain uncontrolled working of sovereignty, but how to secure a counterpoise to autocracy : Fichte's "Ephoralty" : dangers of an expert governing class : democratic ideal, personal interest of each citizen : complexity and crises of civilised government fatal to democracy, in any genuine sense : supreme concern, what is the tone and character of the expert class? : value of an independent (semi-feudal) class to criticise and control official world : this the secret of English stability : sharp line under empire between the mass and the bureaux : emperor's efforts thwarted.

§ 3. Creditable policy and character of the younger Justin : ineffectual attempt of Tiberius to conciliate silent but steadfast opposition : Maurice's want of tact and untimely harshness : official recommendation (as Priscus to Heraclius) "emperor not to lead army" : army despised civilian-emperor : stern lesson read to the capital by Heraclius : "not indispensable to the empire" : Constantinople not yet the Warder of Europe against Islam : impertinent conceit of Demes in claiming and exercising political power : unique and unseemly emergence of the mob, as arbiter of the throne : once again provincial feeling, more whole-

some and patriotic, reacts upon capital: would wiser personalities have averted the downfall of the system?

§ 4. This period shows most clearly constitutional difficulties of the empire: disintegrating influence at work in all classes: the Church: rancour of religious dissenters: possible treason among the heretics: but even if Church united, disloyal elements elsewhere made governing impossible: Justin's wise firmness and moderation; checked by ill-health, the result of helplessness: offers to appoint governors nominated by the provinces: the sovereign in this period unmistakably the best man of the age: unequal struggle against official privilege, reducing people to servitude, monarch to impotence: danger of this exceptional position greater in an official, than in a purely feudal, class: honourable condition of monarchical success, to *represent the people:* truthfulness to its original popular origin: cynical immunity of wealth, office, and privilege in republics.

§ 5. Significance of monarchical revival in modern days ineffectual attempt to explain away: emblem and guarantee of an equity elsewhere unattainable: monarchical legacy of Napoleon to France, most abiding result of Revolution: harmless parliamentary pastime: people do not gain by substitution of democratic officialism for a feudal governing-class: successive decay in sense of public duty, — corrupt oligarchy to whom office is profit: imperial officials become gaolers of sovereigns and robbers of the people.

§ 6. Difficulties of Tiberius II.: his bodyguard of slaves: was it as a counterpoise to existing armies, on which he could no longer depend?: barbarian attachment to persons: foreign mercenaries nearly always surround despotic throne,—Turkish guard, Janissaries, Swiss and Albanians: misdirected attempts to conciliate other classes by doles: society demoralised: "subjects to reign with him": unfortunate choice: perpetual financial distress of Maurice: his reforms abortive: employs relatives or foreigners in chief command: relief felt even in better circles at the mutiny of Phocas.

§ 7. Theory of the "democratic" appeal to Demes, by Tiberius II.: recognised position of Demarchs, their "tribunes": while Maurice reverted to "aristocratic" assistance: vanity of both reinforcements: curious and pathetic incident, showing popularity of heredity succession: Maurice's strange will: empire partitioned as an estate: same uneasy apprehension dogs Phocas: we pass suddenly into pure barbarism: irony of eulogy from Pope and exarch on the worst of Byzantine rulers.

CHAPTER IV

The Protest of Carthage; or, the Second African House and the Orthodox Crusade (610–711 A.D.)

§ 1. The second successful champion of the Roman polity from Africa: triumph of Septimius Severus (193–211): abortive attempt of Gordianus I. (238): quiet acceptance in capital of provincial nominee: Heracliads show indifference to its claims and traditions: any deliverer welcome: strange incompetence in war of a military mutiny: armies extinct; patriotic spirit to be rekindled: proposal to leave the capital: solemn compact of emperor, patriarch, and people, ratified by a religious oath: (possible result of a transference of empire to Carthage: Arabs would enter Europe by south-east and Constantinople, not by south-west through Africa and Spain): signal interest of the public compact, subject's and ruler's welfare once more identical.

§ 2. Early maturity and breathless rapidity of the Heraclian House: insignificance of the official class: emperor in this century holds the entire stage: no ministers or secondary agents: (curious incidents, the wife of Constans III. and the brothers of Constantine IV.): personal initiative of "purple-born" princes: revival of orthodoxy and patriotic feeling: the Persian wars, their long and tiresome inconclusiveness: result of triumphant campaigns, the downfall of Persia before Arab attack, Rome too much exhausted to preserve Egypt and Syria.

§ 3. Another cause religious disaffection: welcome extended to an alien protectorate by Eastern dissenters: death of Caliph Othman succeeded by respite for empire: accounts for the secure absence of Constans III. in the West: power and prestige of Constantine IV.: bulwark against the infidel: the Caliphate tributary to the empire: anarchy during and after the reign of Justinian II.: loss of the achievements of the Heracliads, of North Africa: unholy alliance with Terbelis of the last Heracliad.

§ 4. Curious irony places a revenue-officer on the throne in Theodosius III.: was the earlier system of minute and vexatious taxation wellnigh extinct?: suggested disappearance of the civilian official through Balkan peninsula and Lesser Asia: system of "Themes" replaces earlier method of provincial rule and signifies the pre-eminence of the military: intermittent and precarious nature of authority: barbarism of the age and cruel penalties: yet in spite of incoherent polity and ultimate failure of dynasty, incontestable debt to the Heraclian House.

§ 5. In West we see Church and Army (in the disappearance of the State) usurp and engross all human interest: only in Eastern realm steady maintenance of imperial primacy: clear that Heraclius had to strive against clerical encroachments and maintain the

independence of the secular power: central control preserved against official world; refuses to become a puppet: same emergence of sovereignty in contemporary China: Priscus' reproof of emperor for visiting provincial forces and garrisons in person: feudal independence of provincial governors: armies of the State had vanished to give place to personal retinues: Heraclius aimed to substitute impersonal tie of State-duty for loyalty to individuals.

§ 6. The Church half-autonomous: a large tract of public and private life withdrawn from sovereign control: demands conditions before coronation: subsequent vengeance of civil power: endeavour of African and "Isaurian" dynasties to preserve central ascendancy: prominence of Patriarchs: reviving influence of the Senate: personal monarchy restored under Constans and rival elements ousted: his tolerance (or indifference?) reminds the student of his counterpart Frederic II.: he was born too early; clerical and ecclesiastical interests predominant: in struggle against dissident elements, confidence in kinsmen, under Maurice, Phocas, and Heraclius.

§ 7. Temporary success of this attempt to recover central control: much the same task confronts the "Isaurians" of the next epoch: one cause of this greater permanence: territorial continuity in place of ecumenical hegemony: the lost provinces in some sense a gain; greater solidarity: Leo indifferent to the West and to pretensions at overlordship: Western schemes and "occidentalism" of the Heraclian House to him unintelligible: new function of Constantinople:—abruptness of fall of this dynasty: ensuing "see-saw" of civil and military parties ends in welcome to a strong champion of order and centralism: spite of failure great debt to Heraclius and his family.

BOOK IV

ZENITH AND DECLINE OF THE BYZANTINE MONARCHY UNDER ASIATIC INFLUENCE: ROMAN TRADITION, THE COURT, AND THE FEUDAL NOBILITY

CHAPTER I

The Second Syrian House; or, the Attempt at Protestant Reform (717–820 A.D.)

§ 1. General disorder at the moment of renewed Eastern supremacy: Leo III. revives the old Roman spirit of direct control: wars against superstition: directness and simplicity of a militant Puritan: Armenian position in religious matters: opposes the anchoritic tendency and the Hellenic methods of the Church:

metaphysical and unworldly interest: the sterility of the more cultivated classes, defect inherent in all civilised society: only recognised remedy of the distress of the time, to found fresh monasteries: urban culture, lethargic and polite: agriculture in the hands of aliens: "Sclavinia."

§ 2. Novel and practical view of life and religion: Leo "Ironsides" represents English temper: control and reform this world rather than peer into next: his serene composure knows no intervals of nervous despondency: ignorant of the great Roman Epic and suspicious of the Roman Church: Iconoclasm saved the East: indifference of Leo and his son to the fortunes of the Western realm: was it due to ignorance or to policy?: the rupture in any case inevitable: Iconoclasm merely the last cause.

§ 3. Syrian dynasty falls into two periods, steady reconstruction and conservative enjoyment: luxury and order of the reigns of Leo IV. and Constantine VI.: yet even here no indolent seclusion: error to regard Iconoclasm as negative and destructive: behind religious disputes untiring work of rebuilding: "Thematic" system replaces provinces: probable overthrow of the civil administration in early years of seventh century: rudiments under Heraclius of later deliberate development: directness of military rule, regional armies: titles familiar to War Office used to denote administrative areas.

§ 4. Finance brought under special and personal control of the emperor: minister of the Exchequer becomes a secretary of the imperial pleasure: witness to the beneficent intervention of the sovereign in renewed prosperity: future luxury and security due to the reorganised finance of early "Isaurians": measures to lighten and alleviate burdens: local bodies relieved from oppressive change of collection: undoubted danger in Centralism, the temptation of every able and conscientious ruler; yet Leo's measures suited his time: popularity of the sovereign who did everything himself.

§ 5. Legislation: Christian and ecclesiastical temper: the Bible and tradition of the Church: Justinian's tone, still classical and humanitarian: Revelation *v.* Equity: error to represent Iconoclasm as irreligious: recalls (as they thought) Apostolic simplicity: complexity of earlier Roman law and litigiousness no longer applicable: decay of Court-practice since Justinian: may imply distrust of judges, influx of aliens with tribal usage, or improved public spirit: systematic administration of law in abeyance: important cases no doubt "evoked" for emperor's own decision: Septimius Severus and Nicolas II.

§ 6. Agricultural condition of the empire: glebal serfdom disappears: barbarian and Slavonic settlers till the land, on a communal system, or in the service of great landowners: soldier once more a citizen, forbidden to pursue other callings: rigid

line of caste-partition: decisive measures against Banditry: "le roi des Montagnes": unexampled severity: interpretation of Artavasdus' revolt obscure: representative of a party and a reaction, or of mere personal ambition?: curious appeal of Leo IV. for allegiance: significance underlying constant plots to substitute uncles for nephew under Constantine VI. and Irene.

§ 7. In latter years of dynasty, sensible cooling of imperial energy: palace-rule substituted for direct supervision: scions of reigning family immured in suspected obscurity: great commands given to eunuchs: Irene's reign shows the feuds of menials: military leaders forbidden to hold intercourse with Stauracius: he is succeeded by Aëtius, who dethrones Irene in 802: curious resemblance to policy of chamberlains of Honorius: once again household favourites spoil scheme for reunion of East and West: indebtedness to "Isaurian" House, sentinel of Europe: this age the turning-point in Byzantine history.

CHAPTER II

The Pretenders, and the Establishment of the Dynasty of Phrygia (820–919 A.D.)

§ 1. Feminine sovereigns: the influence of women greatest when sovereignty is stationary: accession of Irene excited no resentment in the East: machine of government indifferent to the change of ruler: strenuous and personal character of the empire: advent of Irene harbinger of the later change: employment of eunuchs, as in West the voluntary celibate: motive political rather than domestic: constant aim of the State to destroy or supersede the family: envious of all other groups and associations: as scientific utopias from Plato to present day: democratic family instinct opposes stolid barrier: Roman Empire and Roman Church are grandest applications of this principle: sole recommendation, personal merit and State-commission: hostility to birthright and distaste for genealogies and fear of local and patrimonial influence: East exposed no less than West to the peril of feudalism.

§ 2. The palace-chamberlain is the triumph of the ideal theory of the State: Utopia (like the Italian cities) best governed by a well-trained and disinterested alien: no entanglement of kinship or prejudice: dependent entirely upon the "State": the reign or immunity of Churchmen in Western Europe as civilians and chancellors rests on somewhat different basis: but same principle in royal appointment of bishops to thwart and supervise local magnates whose aim was to found a family.

§ 3. Accession of Nicephorus I. exposes secret disguised in two former centuries,—empire open to any adventurer: epoch of

the Pretenders, especially Armenians: most effective rulers rise from the ranks: elevation of Leo the Armenian: dramatic seizure of power by Michael the Amorian: anomalous creation and unexpected success of Basil: incredible stability of Centralism without a centre: was Basil's acceptance due to his "legitimate" appointment by Michael III.? influence of Church also in favour of a subservient parvenu: the Amorian line resumed sway in Leo VI.

§ 4. Legitimacy recognised and welcomed: two Constantines account for 117 years between them: problem of the motives and causes of this development: Centralism invents new agents to execute its commands: reaction when servant becomes master: immunity of the functionary: Oriental legends of Theophilus (829–842) bear witness to claims of emperor as people's representative: large part of life lay hopelessly outside imperial control: crystallising of rule, usage, and precedent placed limit on sovereign caprice: rare occasions for personal intervention: unique preoccupation of the Absolutist to save Absolutism from itself.

§ 5. Same tendency visible in (so-called) Democratic constitutions: anxiety to secure against outspoken utterance of popular will by elaborate mechanism of checks: actual despotism or direct popular government only possible in the simplest and most rudimentary surroundings: Diocletian's system effected a sensible curtailment of direct prerogative: impotence of the well-meaning sovereigns after Constantine: brief revival of immediate control under elderly civilians: helpless failure of the successors of Justinian to seize the helm: again appears the tendency (867–911) to unify and centralise; at expense of real power: interest of sovereign as well as of people *divide et impera*: precedent checks arbitrary power and vigorous reform: was the step taken rather by the Imperial Council itself than by an ambitious upstart?

§ 6. At close of this epoch begins gradual decline in training and culture of the civilian hierarchy: all this expert discipline a denial of true democracy, which is the apotheosis of the amateur: stealthy advance of the official class to complete control: power lodged in hands of prince as a remedy against noble or mercantile tyranny: growth in distinctness of outline and definiteness of function: civil service opposed both to military class and to body of productive tax-paying citizens.

§ 7. Indictment of the imperial system a damning condemnation of Socialism: same dangerous principle, unlimited power allotted to the State: artificial if benevolent character of the Roman hegemony: held together various nations by the creation of yet another: in this Byzantine civil service lingers Roman spirit and tradition: anti-Hellenic and anti-orthodox features in Armenian and Asiatic: regular rules of promotion overthrown by caprice and favouritism: confidence solely in barbarian emissaries.

§ 8. Lineaments of the system destroyed when empire identified with family and menials: annoyance of the still vigorous military caste: strife of parties henceforth under the empire, a contest between Feudal and Oriental methods of government: the final success of the military faction at close of our period not reassuring: —meantime a reaction is impending, in which a vigorous Shogun is seated side by side with a legitimate prince.

CHAPTER III

The Epoch of the Byzantine "Shogunate"; or, the Age of Military Expansion (919–1025 A.D.)

§ 1. Corrupt peace of Leo's reign succeeded by a more vigorous policy: frank recognition of hereditary right: accumulation of treasure and resource in the empire led to the revival: the dynasty not overthrown, but a regent added: strange circumstance of Romanus I.'s success: seemed, as Leo V. (813), to profit by incompetence: returns from a campaign of treachery or cowardice to dictate terms: a sailor's bluffness and ignorance: no revolution contemplated or permitted: no more palace-ministers but a partner with equal rights.

§ 2. Proof of inexorable demand for personal government, side by side with new feudal respect for descent: a "college" of emperors, two Constantines, Romanus, Stephen, and Christopher: Lecapenus makes an efficient ruler, preferable to an intriguing chamberlain, because his influence overt and responsible: insatiate greed of Romanus for monopoly of power, his son made patriarch: curious parallel instance in John XII. of Rome: appanage of feudal cadets: highest offices in Church secularised: office in Church and State, patrimonial: brief period of frank worldliness in Byzantium: Theophylact unique example of common type in West: prince-bishop and "squarson."

§ 3. Emergence of the military and civilian feud under Romanus II. (959–963): Bringas and Nicephorus Phocas: a straightforward general accepted by the hero-worship of the capital (Napoleon or Vespasian): loyalty of Nicephorus towards his young stepsons: Shogunate assumes itself a semi-hereditary character: crime of John II. (969–976): continues his uncle's policy of military expansion and recovery: his death attributed to civilian jealousy: resents that the labour of soldiers should enrich eunuchs of the palace.

§ 4. Unquestioned accession of Basil II. and Constantine IX. (976–1025): the tradition of the non-interference of legitimate sovereign with affairs not easily overcome: influence of a natural son of Romanus I., the Chamberlain Basilius: but moment inopportune for courtiers' supremacy: rebellion of the two Bardas and

"conversion of Basil to military and ascetic sternness: throws off the traditions of his house, constitutional and secluded sovereignty: in the end the master both in effect and title.

§ 5. Insubordination of the great military caste of Asiatic nobles: revival among the aristocracy of warlike pursuits: obscure formation of a semi-feudal nobility: Basil rids himself of the military pretenders, Sclerus and Phocas: tutelage of Basilius thrown off: Basil, the legitimate heir, now for thirty years the prime minister and commander-in-chief: yet in tireless campaigns of Bulgarian wars, vigilance of imperial control relaxed: one significant aim at reform, a war against the castellated mansions of the Asiatic nobles.

§ 6. Sovereign powerless to arrest advance of local and family right which defies central control and ousts the small freeholder: Basil's example of unremitting toil lost upon his successors: intermittent caprice of Constantine IX., for sixty-eight years Augustus (960–1028): new phase of the undying problem, shall the centre be motionless or efficient?: Basil destroyed the Shogunate of set purpose, although it kept sovereignty sacrosanct and yet maintained control: he reduced all possible rivals and reigned unique and unapproachable: with him the Roman tradition expires.

CHAPTER IV

Extinction of Roman Tradition under the Daughters of Constantine IX. (1025–1081 A.D.)

§ 1. Eastern menace of the Seljukians: in spite of the military revival, civilian rivalry destroyed the arms and defences of the realm: inopportune culture and literary vanity of the Augusti: soldiers' caste alienated and frontiers exposed by short-sighted economy: substitution of mercenaries, the Varangian Guard: fiscal system vexatious and ill-timed: alienation of new Balkan subjects: no attachment of "Bulgarian" loyalty to overcome; but oppression fatal to obedience: strange barbarian and Danish favourites: success of feudal noble (Magniac) dogged by envy and official hindrance.

§ 2. Feminine ascendancy: the daughters of Constantine IX. (1028–1057): the "Shogunate" revived by the Empress Eudocia: mere accident or caprice elevates, in this romantic era of sovereignty: conspicuous interest of the populace in these vicissitudes: abundant material of dramatic incident: atmosphere of scenic effect and unreality: meantime the last vestige of Roman institutions vanishes.

§ 3. Suspicion and distrust of Basil's latter years; surrounded by alien confidantes: he overthrew method and procedure of civil service by undue promotion; agents of power without personal

honour or national sympathy: imperialism and its problems; it often involves the doubtful policy of ruling a people for their good against their will (India, Egypt, Ireland): English critic can scarce avoid approval of the imperial ideal: the bureaucracy with its corporate honour and well-trained functionaries extinguished in this age.

§ 4. The abolition of routine and precedent the true "Orientalism" on which ship of State foundered: law supplanted by favourites: army and civil service had at no time been entirely foreign: curious automatism of Basil's successors: powerful administration of John, President of the Foundling Hospital, brother and uncle of successive emperors: favourites of Constantine X. (1042–1054): crowning error, disarming of the Bagratid vassals: he aims not merely at the pride of the great Asiatic nobles but at the very defences of the Eastern frontiers.

§ 5. Overt military reaction and revolution under Michael VI.: lively narrative of the conspiracy by Psellus: strangely unsuccessful issue of a soldier's bid for supremacy: Constantine XI. restores civilian influence: he revokes the pains and penalties imposed by Isaac Comnenus: pillage of public funds for private purposes already begun: patrimonialism without chivalry: systematic neglect and insult of the warrior-faction: wise choice of Eudocia: the new military regent for Michael VII.. and Constantine XII: the revival too late under Romanus IV., Diogenes: civilian misrule had done its worst: triumph of the Senate over the fallen champion of the empire: new and strange features come to light under Michael VII.: last foothold in Italy disappears and novel factors enter from the West: with the scuffle of pretenders (Nicephorus III. and IV. and Alexius I., 1081–1083) the Roman Empire passes away.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD

§ 1. Has the study of human development any utilitarian value?: does a scientific knowledge of the past enable us to control present or future?: fallacy of momentous dates and dramatic events: great issues work out silently: the imperial system not the work of individuals: no arbitrary caprice: sovereignty here is representative: generous origin and aim of the empire, *pacific* and *impersonal*: its agents embodiments of the Idea and tend to *centralise*, because the Idea is itself unique.

§ 2. To discuss the precise "seat of sovereignty" idle and academic: government resultant of many independent and conflicting forces: "Will of People" (if ever unanimously expressed) must always have its way: moral force behind rulers: democracy (in genuine sense) not "without witness" in the past: except on

very rare occasions and in very rudimentary surroundings, absolute monarchy or absolute democracy, a pure chimæra: Roman emperor did in fact exercise direct control: due to his impersonal and *representative* character: two original types of society, family or clan; artificial group: *rex*, *dux*: moral suasion and parental authority, forcible coercion and tried ability: the modern State belongs to latter class: released from moral aims or prepossession about the time of the Reformation: utility and force the basis.

§ 3. No terrorist prediction as result: social life largely independent of any reasoned basis or moral conviction: modern State and nationalism (territorial and economical rather than racial or sentimental) has origin in military conqueror: is not an extension of family authority, although modern royalty assumes a parental attitude: so State contemplates abolition of lesser groups and disputes the claims of the family: substitution of Utopian central control: indefinite increase in cost of government and number of officials: in these schemes, modern Socialism joins hands with empire and even exaggerates its defects: we are not then free to censure it until we have purged ourselves.

§ 4. The imperial ideal revives *pacific* and *parental* notions: the Senate could not hope to rival its representative character: wise limits of parental control: does not imply jealous or minute supervision: patience with idiosyncrasy and tolerance of local peculiarity: passion for uniformity as mischievous as devotion to law for its own sake: Cæsar forced to undertake the task: ability and success, sole tests of fitness: hence sacrifice of noble lives in fruitless effort to unite *efficiency* and *stability*: intentional indefiniteness of the imperial position.

§ 5. Under the now centralising monarch, two orders of agency—*civil* and *military*: the various revivals of personal and direct control may for a time increase absolutism but in the end check its exercise: continual proposals for vice-emperor: rejected by reaction: if power *unified*, life and its functions *specialised*: independence of the three corporations, Church, Army, Civil Service: curious and significant phase of this feud in our last period: feudal nobility and alien favourites of an Oriental court: extinction of Roman spirit and tradition.

§ 6. So far domestic development: pressing exterior problem: limits to "liberal imperialism"?: a "White Australia": genuine respect of barbarian for Rome: valuable aid and counterpoise in Teutonic spirit: subjectivity *v.* petrifying society: rural interests and healthy pursuits: possible influence of a continued Western line: inept simulacrum of Merovingian royalty,—counterfeit of the empire: elevation of Charles witness to the value and tradition of Cæsar.

§ 7. Curious and unsympathetic attitude of Hegel to the im-

perial system: no sense of its conscientious or representative character: inconsistent verdict,—the "triumph of subjectivity": yet "the personal character of Cæsar immaterial": evidence shows Cæsar stood for the whole and (as in modern Cæsarism) carried through reforms and measures of public welfare, beyond scope of any other class or corporation: centralised Cæsarism not the best form of government because it does too much: but may be considered the single remedy against dangerous equilibrium and deadlock of modern democracy: Roman history constitutes an indictment of over-interference and tutelage; but holds up the conscientious and personal service of the imperial line for our admiration.

END OF VOL. I

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